

Narratives of power:
Critical reflections on signed language interpreting

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how signed language interpreters in the UK conceptualise power dynamics within their professional practice. By exploring theories of power by Foucault and Bourdieu, drawing on white studies and investigating work in Deaf studies, this thesis explores the power of the societally dominant discourse of deafness as a deficit.

Qualitative data were generated through the collection of reflective journals from ten participants about their perceptions of power dynamics. These were followed up by semi-structured debrief interviews. Analysis involved a combination of narrative inquiry and critical discourse techniques.

Analysis reveals that signed language interpreters do describe managing power dynamics, often in favour of the deaf signer. However, an entrenched metaphor of interpreting (the machine or conduit model) interferes with described attempts to address unequal power dynamics. Furthermore, when a deaf signer is perceived as having intersecting characteristics that could potentially increase their marginalisation in society, the signed language interpreters were even more likely to describe attempting to address power inequalities.

This research contributes to theory and professional practice by introducing the concept of *emancipatory interpreting*, which is a framework for thinking about the management of power dynamics when working with a client who is in an oppressed minority group.

Dedication

For Freya

Acknowledgements

I owe a great deal of thanks to so many people who made it possible for me to study, research and write this thesis. First and foremost, I want to thank the participants in my research: the scoping study members, those who piloted my study and the ten interpreters who took part in the main study. Without your input, none of this would have been possible. Thank you for your time, willingness and honesty.

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ACADEMIC REGISTRY

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Chapter 1: Introduction

At one level, inequity is at the very heart of the interpreting task; two individuals, who do not share a common or preferred language, seek to connect and an interpreter is present to mediate the communication exchange. Because the interpreter is a member of the majority English-speaking language community, and the deaf person is typically the language minority, there is an inherent inequity imposed on the interaction.

(Witter-Merithew and Johnson 2005, p.32)

Because the deaf community is a minority group, much of the cultural mediation that sign language interpreters do is related to explaining or equalising the deaf client's position, rather than *vice versa*. As a result, interpreters can also be seen as 'allies' in the deaf community's struggle for empowerment.

(Napier, McKee and Goswell 2010, p.65)

Equalising the position of the deaf client is a power move, something that signed language interpreters engage in, according to Napier, McKee and Goswell (2010), on a regular basis. Power dynamics are something that these interpreters have to gauge in each interaction. Signed language interpreters (hereafter referred to as SLIs) have to assess whether the power dynamics are favourable for everyone to achieve their communication aims, whether each participant in the interaction has the knowledge they need to be successful and whether each participant is empowered as an agent in the interaction.

Imagine the situation. You are a SLI working with two clients, one an English speaker who can hear and one a British Sign Language (hereafter referred to as BSL) user who is deaf. The hearing person has met neither a deaf BSL user before nor an SLI and is curious about BSL. They are also curious about your job and turn to you to ask how long it took you to learn BSL. This direct question to you excludes the deaf BSL user because to answer it you need to speak in English. What do you do? Do you politely answer the question and then hope there are no follow up questions so that you can interpret the question to the deaf client? Do you address the exclusion by reminding the hearing client that you are acting in your capacity as a SLI and you can answer direct questions later? Do you direct the question to the deaf client, so that you can avoid

answering, though you may risk confusing the hearing client? The way in which you decide to manage this seemingly harmless question from an interested hearing client has an impact on the power dynamics that are manifesting in this interaction. As an interpreter who often hears this type of question you are aware that many deaf signers are regularly excluded from conversations, whether deliberately or through a lack of experience in this type of encounter. They find it thoughtless, or exclusionary or just wearying. The choice you make impacts on them, and it impacts on the hearing client. By including the deaf person as soon as possible, you may alert the hearing client to their potentially exclusionary behaviour and promote an inclusive environment for the rest of the interaction.

As we can see interpreters have power: there is no denying it (Merlini and Favaron 2003; Mason and Ren 2012; Bahadir 2010). Not only do their decisions for coordinating an interaction have an impact, but they can also choose to omit information or fabricate information and, potentially, no-one would be any the wiser. These deliberate manipulations might seem entirely unethical, however there are more nuanced efforts that interpreters can make to manage power dynamics in favour of a client who they perceive to be disempowered or excluded. I am interested in how SLIs conceptualise power dynamics in their work, how they think about them and what they do about them.

1.1 Introduction to the Signed Language Interpreting Profession in the UK

In order to set the scene for this research I will begin by describing the context of signed language interpreters in the UK. I will briefly touch on the registering bodies, the professional bodies that represent them and the routes to qualification for SLIs. I will be discussing hearing SLIs and not the profession of Deaf Interpreters (DIs) for the purposes of this study because I am interested in the identity of ‘being hearing’ (or non-deaf). Being a member of the hearing majority (rather than the deaf signing minority, as it is for DIs) has an impact on the power dynamics between the deaf client and the SLI and the hearing client and the SLI. This would operate differently for DIs.

Signed language interpreting in the UK has been an established profession with a formal register in Scotland from 1981 and in England, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1982. For nearly forty years there has been a body of professional SLIs who work with a professional code of conduct and disciplinary procedure to provide interpreting services between hearing English speakers and deaf BSL users in different settings. SLIs in the UK are either registered with the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) or the Scottish Association of Sign

Language Interpreters (SASLI) and a small number of SLIs are registered with the Regulatory Body for Sign Language Interpreters and Translators (RBSLI), which is an alternative register established in 2015. The number of registered SLIs working in the UK can be found by adding each register together, though there are some SASLI registered SLIs who are also registered with NRCPD, so this number is approximate. NRCPD's statistics for 2017 report 1016 registered SLIs in the UK. SASLI have 81 SLIs listed on their website as of March 2018 and RBSLI list 24 SLIs on their website. This gives a total of 1121. This figure does not include the numbers of trainee interpreters working in the UK.

SLIs have the choice of being part of a professional association who usually provide insurance to practice, continuing professional development opportunities and support. In Scotland this is currently provided by SASLI who also hold the register, though SLIs working in Scotland can choose to be members of other associations as well and they can be registered with NRCPD if they choose. In the rest of the UK there are two professional associations; the Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) who are the longest standing after SASLI and were established in 1987. Secondly, there are Visual Language Professionals (VLP) who were established in 2010 as an alternative association. These associations hold annual conferences and may provide continuing professional development opportunities through regional workshops and webinars. They also represent the voice of SLIs at a national level. Sitting alongside these associations is the National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters (NUBSLI) who campaign on issues related to fees and working conditions.

The route to qualifying as a registered SLI is not straightforward as there are various different ways of going about this. There are currently three universities in the UK who are offering degrees at undergraduate and graduate levels that qualify the graduate to become a registered SLI. In the past there were other universities who provided these qualifications as well. Alternatively, if an individual attains a Level 6 National Vocational Qualification Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting (through awarding bodies called Signature and iBSL) they can become a registered SLI. These varying routes mean that there is no unified curriculum for all SLIs to follow before qualifying. However, NRCPD do map the university routes to qualification to ensure that they match professional standards.

My research focuses on this British context and the participants in my research are all registered SLIs. Before I introduce what I will be focusing on in more detail I will start by introducing myself briefly.

1.2 Introduction to the Researcher and the Research

My own training to become a SLI at Bristol University included learning that deaf people who use BSL are often a part of a community of other BSL users who celebrate their language, their culture and their way of life. This led me to recognise that as a cultural-linguistic minority (Ladd, 2003) they are often discriminated against in policy-making decisions, educational opportunities and in society more generally. Once I began working as a trainee SLI, I regularly came up against behaviours and attitudes of hearing English speakers which disempowered deaf signers or made assumptions about them that undermined their capacity to be autonomous human beings who had equal rights as citizens. I also met many deaf people who were disenfranchised, disempowered and disillusioned by the way their lives were organised for them by societal structures. This disempowering set of circumstances often led me to feel ineffectual despite my ability to transfer language between clients. The code of conduct for SLIs, which at the time included a commitment to impartiality, seemed to put constraints on me which meant that I felt I was unable to take action to attempt any empowering of the deaf clients I worked with, however small that action might be. This felt unjust and left me feeling that I was doing an unsatisfactory job on a regular basis. Consequently, power dynamics have always been of interest to me and motivate the research that I have undertaken. A more in-depth description of my positionality as a researcher can be found in section 4.2 of the methods and methodology chapter; however, in brief, I do position myself as a researcher who is aligned with the value of social justice and equal rights for deaf people. Therefore, as I began this doctoral research I wanted to know how other SLIs conceptualised power dynamics, how they managed them and whether they were able to ethically justify their management strategies.

Consequently, I set out to explore **how** SLIs think about power dynamics, **what** SLIs do when they see a set of power dynamics that they deem notable and **why** SLIs take action when they see these power dynamics. I wanted to uncover the intentions, motivations and justifications of SLIs in these potentially conflictual situations. Additionally, it seems to me that SLIs need to understand how these actions relate to, conflict with, or challenge the existing norms of their profession, including their code of conduct. If social justice objectives or equality objectives clash with an interpreting ethic, how can SLIs find professional resolutions?

The warrant for this research is that power dynamics are a daily occurrence for any individual, but especially for people belonging to minority groups. As SLIs always

work with a minimum of one member of a minority group (deaf signers¹) and one member of the dominant hearing majority in society, there is the potential in every assignment for them to have to manage this dynamic and make decisions which impact on it. In spoken language interpreting this is less often the case, particularly in conference, business or political settings where the languages and people are regularly on a par. However, in refugee or asylum-seeker situations one person may feel distinctly less powerful due to their minority status. In these situations, the spoken language interpreter is likely to be a member of the minority group which is why they know the language. SLIs on the other hand, whether they are people from deaf families² (PDFs) who learned signed language as children or not, are by definition members of the hearing majority because they need to be able to hear the spoken language in order to interpret into the signed language. This automatic membership of the dominant majority group gives them privileges as a hearing person and makes them potential oppressors of deaf signers. For SLIs who are also PDFs this could produce a conflicted identity. Hearing SLIs who are aware of this can choose to collude in the *status quo*, maintaining oppressive or discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards deaf signers, or they can choose to overturn these embedded beliefs and challenge the *status quo*. Therefore, SLIs have to have clear strategies and a framework for thinking critically about power dynamics and acting on them. We need research into this phenomenon because we need to better understand whether there is an impact of this ‘hearing’ identity on the interpreting provision.

As I have already alluded to, I have devised an overarching research question:

How do SLIs conceptualize power dynamics in their professional practice?

In order to answer this question, I have devised four sub questions:

What language do SLIs use when they are narrating stories about power dynamics?

What actions and techniques do SLIs describe when they attempt to make an impact on power dynamics?

What rationales do SLIs offer for their actions and techniques?

What traits are revealed through the stories SLIs tell about power dynamics in their practice (using a Freirean analysis)?

¹ The term deaf signer is one I will use consistently throughout this thesis to refer to deaf people who use signed language. I explain in more detail in section 1.4 about this choice of terminology.

² People from deaf families (PDFs) is a term coined by Napier (Napier and Leeson 2016)

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

I intend to signpost for the reader how the chapters of this thesis will address the research and answer the research questions. In **chapter 2**, I explore literature on the concept of power from a sociological perspective incorporating theoretical insights from Foucault and Bourdieu. This broad approach will then define in more detail the concept of privilege and its relationship to discriminatory discourses about whiteness and disability. This allows for a discussion of hearingness and hearing privilege, terms which are a part of the professional discourse of SLIs. I then discuss the field of Deaf studies and focus on the positioning of deaf people using an alternative, empowering discourse. Finally, I discuss applied work on the promotion of equality and the rejection of discriminatory practices from the fields of social work and education. Here I introduce the framework of Freire (1970) which becomes vital for the analysis stage of the research.

In **chapter 3**, I trace the scholarship in interpreting studies that grapples with the interactional and participatory nature of the practice of interpreting. I explore the focus on power and agency that occurs in the field. I then turn to the professionalisation of interpreting and the impact this has had on notions of the interpreter's role. I look at different models of interpreting that have been proposed throughout the evolution of the profession, which impact on an interpreter's conceptualization of their responsibilities. I identify gaps in the literature on power and power dynamics.

In **chapter 4**, I turn to the methodology and methods that I have chosen to carry out my proposed research. I discuss in detail my positionality as a researcher. I explain my rationale for the methods I selected which incorporated narrative inquiry and the collection of reflective diaries followed by debrief interviews of ten SLIs. I then describe the recruitment process. Having set the scene for the data collection exercise, I go on to present a profile of the participants in this study. I follow on from this with a discussion of the analytical tools that I use for interpreting the data, which include a mixture of narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis.

In **chapter 5 and 6**, I discuss the results of my data analysis following the research questions in order. In the first of these chapters I answer the first two sub-questions by providing an exploration of the SLIs' use of language related to power followed by an examination of the actions and techniques they use to manipulate power dynamics. In **chapter 6**, I answer the last two research sub-questions firstly by describing the ways in which the SLIs rationalise their actions in relation to power dynamics and secondly by

characterising some of the SLIs' traits using a framework that Freire (1970) provides and which is discussed in chapter 2 in detail.

In the final chapter of this thesis, **chapter 7**, I provide some deeper discussion about how the answers to the sub-questions throw light on the main research question: how do SLIs conceptualize power dynamics in their professional practice? I draw conclusions about the analysis and propose an alternative framework for thinking about interpreting practice. I follow on from this by focusing on the contributions this research has made to theory, methodology and professional practice and then cover the limitations of my research. I conclude with some recommendations for further research and interpreter training.

1.4 Definitions and Terminology

I here describe the terminology that I use throughout the thesis. Firstly, I refer to people who are not deaf as 'hearing', as will have been noted in this chapter thus far. This is accepted terminology in Deaf studies (Napier and Leeson 2016) and distinguishes non-deaf people from deaf people. I have chosen specific terminology to refer to deaf people who use signed language. To give a brief context, the word 'deaf' describes the physical attribute of people who are unable to hear to some degree. Deaf people have a number of options when it comes to communicating depending on their background, upbringing and degree of deafness. Some deaf people can choose to use hearing aids or other technologies to augment any existing hearing and can access spoken language. Other deaf people have had no opportunity to learn BSL and though they may not have the capacity to use hearing technologies they may learn to lipread and speak. Some deaf people refer to themselves as 'hard-of-hearing' (HoH) and this often refers to those who speak and either lipread or use technology to augment any residual hearing. Others use BSL and possibly a combination of communication strategies. In order to distinguish between deaf people who sign and use SLIs to communicate and those who do not, I refer to deaf signed language users as 'deaf signers'. 'Deaf signers' incorporates the rather clumsy and lengthy descriptor otherwise needed. Discussion about why I have rejected other possible terminology such as 'Deaf people' (using a capital 'D') is incorporated in section 2.4.

1.5 Boundaries

The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p.3)

The “conceptual systems” of power that SLIs employ in their work are what interests me the most. The power of a conceptual system to govern how an SLI perceives an interpreted encounter needs to be investigated. Therefore, this research will focus on SLIs’ conceptualisations of power dynamics and not on the real-life, observable strategies that they use in their assignments. The way in which SLIs construct power and the effects of power as they talk or write about them reveals how they perceive them. Those perceptions have a significant impact on their consequent professional decision-making. The way in which SLIs frame power governs how they manipulate power, or not. Therefore, I deem it a priority to analyse these conceptualisations in order, ultimately, to critique them for the benefit of the profession. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) go on from the quote above to state that our conceptual system is mostly something that we are unaware of. It seems vital, therefore, that there be research into how this conceptual system is constructed so that it can become more visible, more analysable and so that SLIs can become more critical in their own analysis of their actions.

I will therefore not be researching the socio-linguistic practices of SLIs by applying methods like pragmatics or conversational analysis to the interactions of SLIs. Though these approaches to researching power dynamics have validity and expose a particular aspect of the subject under study, they have less potential to unveil the motivations and intentions of SLIs and even less capacity to allow for scrutiny of their conceptual systems of power dynamics.

Chapter 2: Constructs of Power

2.1 Introduction

Signed language interpreters (SLIs) belong to a linguistic majority group in society but work with a linguistic minority of deaf signers. Additionally, interpreters hold power as a routine part of their jobs, managing interactions and shifting power between different participants. This results in power differentials and a set of complex relational dynamics. The focus of this study is to explore SLIs' conceptualisations of these power dynamics and critically analyse underlying ideologies present in those perceptions.

The term 'dynamics' was first established in psychoanalytic literature by Freud to describe the individual psyche as a system of unstable energies. Freud envisages the personality as made up of unconscious drives which are held in a dynamic tension (Ellis, Abrams & Abrams 2009). The term has been combined with 'power' to refer to the dynamic tensions evident in group interactions. Discussions of power dynamics are found in the field of business and organizational management theory (Brauer & Bourhis 2006) and in social psychology (Dijke & Poppe 2006). Dijke & Poppe envisage power dynamics in a social setting and describe them in two ways, as 'social power, which is a possibility or capacity to affect others, even if these others would resist such influence attempts', and as 'personal power, which is the extent to which actors (power holders) are capable to act with agency, or to produce their intended effects in the environment' (2006, p.538). I follow this combined approach of Dijke and Poppe and use the term 'power dynamics' as a metaphor that acknowledges the unstable, shifting flow of power in interactions. This approach recognises that power is not static and does not reside with any one actor in a given situation; rather, it is constantly under negotiation, shifting between actors in a dynamic fashion.

This review of the literature aims to provide a context and background for this study and is divided into two parts; chapter 2 focuses on power from a broader sociological perspective and chapter 3 focuses on power within the field of interpreting studies. In this chapter I will cover the theoretical frameworks which underpin this study and include a review of some of the literature that situates power as a sociological concept by discussing the work of Foucault and Bourdieu in section 2.2. This is followed in section 2.3 by an exploration of the study of privilege. In section 2.4 I situate the research within Deaf Studies, and the final section in this chapter, 2.5, addresses the practicalities of facilitating liberation and equality. This interdisciplinary approach to the concept of

power among hearing sign language interpreters allows for a comprehensive analysis of the intersecting aspects of this social phenomenon.

2.2 What is Power? Finding a Definition

In order to understand the power dynamics of interpreted encounters it will be important to look at the work of sociological theorists who have analysed the practice of power and its effects. I will begin by looking at Foucault and Bourdieu in order to find descriptions of power. Interrogating the idea that power can be institutionalised and simultaneously trickle into the practices that are a part of people's daily lives is critical for thinking about how interpreters acquire power and how they use it. It is also important to explore whether having power and wielding power are entirely conscious or unconscious actions.

2.2.1 Foucault – Discourses and Techniques of Power

Power is not essentially negative or positive from Foucault's perspective, however it is "omnipresent and productive" (Westwood 2002, p.19). Foucault's concept of power emphasizes that it is exercised through discourses: a set of ideological beliefs and assumptions which permeate society (Thompson 1998, p.24). These discourses shape the way we think and frame our understanding of the world. They can also be used to dominate and oppress and though they can be utilised by the ruling class in this way Foucault is also at pains to say that "every human relation is to some degree a power relation. We move in a world of perpetual strategic relations" (Foucault 1988, p.168) making it clear that every individual is exercising power in each encounter regardless of status.

For Foucault power is intimately connected with knowledge and *vice versa* to the extent that Foucault often refers to them as "power/knowledge" (Foucault 1980). In his view, knowledge that is claimed to be truth is an expression of power which can serve to constrain or free others. In his study of prisons, *Discipline and Punish*, he writes, "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations" (Foucault 1977, p.27). He asserts that there is no objective truth to be found but there is knowledge which when given the authority of truth can be powerful because of its capacity to frame discourses. He refers to this as a "regime of truth" (Foucault 1980, p.131). He contends that agents of power often create discourses of 'truth' in order to control others. As Clarke and Garner succinctly put it, "Foucault shows us how expert

discourses develop systems of knowledge that sustain power relations and domination in society” (Clarke and Garner 2010, p.116). Discourses can at times be discriminatory or oppressive and, conversely, they can be emancipatory.

‘Bio-power’, or power over bodies, is a term Foucault uses to describe the ways in which governing systems manage groups of people who present some difficulty; this includes deaf and disabled people (Tremain 2001). “Technologies of normalization” (Foucault 1980, p.137) aid in the identification of these groups and separate them from the rest of society, leading to an objectification of them and consequently placing upon them an identity that they cannot easily throw off. Examples of these technologies might include the systems that require deaf children to be identified at birth and the follow up that they then receive, which could include medical intervention (cochlear implant) or language intervention (British Sign Language instruction for parents and child). These technologies of power and the discourses attached to them frame the way society thinks about deafness as a deficiency or as a difference. In section 2.4.1, I discuss in detail the discourse of audism which identifies deaf people as deficient and the technologies of normalisation that are imposed upon them.

For Foucault, however, power is not only exercised in the disciplining rules of institutions but also in the family and in social encounters in our daily lives in which the “normative codes of behaviour prevailing in society” are internalised and then enacted by individuals (Burns 1992, p.164), making individuals into vehicles of power, whether consciously or unconsciously. Power is not owned, but exercised so that individuals undergo power and exercise power simultaneously; to use Foucault’s words, individuals “articulate” power (Foucault 1980, p.98)

In applying this framework to my research, I am prompted to ask the following questions about sign language interpreting; how does the individual interpreter articulate power and what ‘techniques’ does s/he use? As hearing individuals who live in a society where the discourse of power situates deaf people as disabled or deficient and these ideologies are institutionalised (see section 2.4.2 on audism), interpreters are often situated in a position of power. Recognising that society is dictating these ideologies and that no-one can easily escape being inculcated in them must be a first step to changing the behaviours that they produce. Another question that I have for the field of interpreting is: what are the expert discourses of the profession which maintain the domination of deaf people? We might consider, perhaps, the long established and only relatively recently contested idea that interpreters are invisible, machine-like conduits of communication (see section 3.3 for an in-depth discussion). The danger in this belief, upheld in codes of

conduct for interpreters around the world, is that everyone involved in an interpreted interaction allows invisible privileges to remain invisible. By being conditioned to understand that interpreters are neutral, and that being neutral is passive, SLIs may not consider themselves to be agents of power and yet they may articulate power unconsciously.

Having established that power is not something that is owned by an individual but articulated by a social agent in relation to another social agent and, furthermore, informed by ideological discourses that can serve to dominate or liberate, I turn now to the contribution of Bourdieu. Bourdieu investigates how a social agent becomes ingrained with these ideological discourses and practices power on a daily basis without noticing their own articulations or techniques.

2.2.2 Bourdieu - Invisible and Unconscious Power

In *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991) Bourdieu tells us,

we have to be able to discover [power] in places where it is least visible, where it is most completely misrecognised - and thus, in fact, recognised. For symbolic power is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it. (Bourdieu 1991, pp.163, 164)

Bourdieu is interested in sociological enquiry into this invisible practice of power. He wants to understand the ways in which the dominant class maintains and reproduces its own dominance. It is not achieved through the instigation of a set of social rules that everyone must obey and that the dominated adhere to, but by the creation of a false consciousness of the dominated which reproduces the social hierarchy (Bourdieu 1991, p.167). Bourdieu established this in his own sociological research and the methodology that he developed. Through Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' the sociologist is given a set of tools for analysing the practices of social agents. Bourdieu states his intentions in creating his theory of practice as being born out in the question "how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?" (Bourdieu 1990, p.65). He offers the scholar three tools – habitus, capital and field – for investigating social phenomena. I will describe in brief each of these concepts.

2.2.3 *Habitus*

The habitus is created through socialisation, from childhood in particular but also throughout the life course, into societal norms, behaviours and beliefs. Family socialisation is especially deeply rooted and slow to change even though it can develop. Habitus essentially disposes a person to behave in a certain way and provides a foundation on which they base their interactions with others (Jenkins 2002). Bourdieu describes habitus as “systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules...” (Bourdieu 1977, p.72, *italics in original*). Bourdieu is interested in the embodiment of societal habits in individuals who in any given interaction then use those habits or dispositions to make conscious and unconscious decisions about how they will interact, or ‘practice’. For Bourdieu, the habitus allows individuals to see and also not see options in a situation. The very creation of the habitus hides itself within its own dispositions, incorporating historical understandings and behaviours without revealing to the individual the whys and wherefores of its structure. Bourdieu refers to the habitus as an “immanent law” which gives a person “mastery of a common code” that allows people to coordinate their own practices (Bourdieu 1977, p.81). The embodied nature of the habitus means that dispositions become like ‘muscle memory’ and continue to function that way long past the initial stimulus which created the disposition (Maton 2008).

In his critique of Bourdieu, Maton gives us insight into Bourdieu’s objective in developing this tool for analysis, he tells us:

Revealing the hidden workings of habitus is thus, for Bourdieu, a kind of “socio-analysis”, a political form of therapy enabling social agents to understand more fully their place in the social world. (Maton 2008, p.59)

The desire to reveal the hidden nature of the habitus is something that I would like to apply to signed language interpreting. Part of the habitus of an interpreter is being a member of a majority group of hearing people in an audist society, a society where the expectation is that people can hear and communicate in a spoken language (see section 2.4.1 for an in-depth analysis of audism). An interpreter therefore will be inculcated in this way of being and behaving. Audism is one element which influences how organizations, communication infrastructure and institutional practices are structured and

maintained and remains invisible to the majority. Another disposition of a hearing interpreter is mastery in managing hearing world interactions. This disposition is likely to be invisible and unconscious to the individual. It is a routine performance done unthinkingly. Bourdieu considers habitus to be historical so that values from earlier generations permeate society and socialise the individual. Interpreters will internalize ideological concepts, like audism (see 2.4.1) or the conduit model of interpreting (see 3.3), and if they have not considered them, may still hold the values therein. Interpreters will in all likelihood align with hearing practices without thinking unless something prompts them to analyse these practices and reconstruct them.

Crucially for Bourdieu, the moment when habitus becomes enacted is in the interaction between individuals (agents):

Every confrontation between agents in fact brings together, in an *interaction* defined by the *objective structure* of the relation between the groups they belong to (e.g. a boss giving orders to a subordinate, colleagues discussing their pupils, academics taking part in a symposium), systems of dispositions (carried by ‘natural persons’) such as linguistic competence and a cultural competence and, through these habitus, all the objective structures of which they are the product, structures which are active only when *embodied* in a competence acquired in the course of a particular history (with the different types of bilingualism or pronunciation, for example, stemming from different modes of acquisition). (Bourdieu 1997, p.81)

For the interpreter, one site for the habitus to operate is in their interpreting work, where their habitus informs the production of their communicative output and shapes their understanding of the situation and how to respond. If an interpreter’s habitus is unconscious and if the interpreter has rarely reflected on their underlying values and views, or deconstructed them, they will be governed by their habitus and potentially maintain audist attitudes towards deaf people.

2.2.4 Capital

Bourdieu uses the term capital to describe the types of assets that agents possess, economic and otherwise. In his analysis, there are different types of capital; economic, social and cultural. Cultural capital consists of educational credentials, language ability, and cultural awareness, among other things (Swartz 1997, p. 75) for example, an agent with a private education has cultural capital which would then give them a better chance

at securing employment. In the right field, this type of capital will serve them well and give them more opportunities. Bourdieu analyses the educational system as one that privileges the students with more cultural capital rather than the students who have 'natural' abilities (Swartz 1997). Cultural capital is therefore accumulated over time, from childhood onwards, through school systems and parents' endeavours to ensure their children have access to books and art, for example. This clearly disadvantages children whose parents or guardians do not have the means to do this and reproduces social inequalities. Social capital also comes from being connected to people who can further your goals and can again be beneficial depending on the situation a person finds themselves in. Capital can be used to exercise power in a specific field.

A sign language interpreter holds capital in an interpreting interaction. Firstly, they are members of the dominant linguistic group (as hearers and speakers of a spoken language) and they hold linguistic capital because they can communicate in the two languages that are needed for the interaction. They also hold two cultural competencies, an understanding of hearing cultural norms and of deaf cultural norms (see section 2.4) which allows for better understanding of meaning when interpreting between these cultures. However, depending on the nature of the interpreting assignment, the other members of the interaction may hold more or less capital. For example, in a medical appointment a doctor may be assumed to be the most highly educated and to hold the most power over the interpreter and the deaf patient. On the other hand, in a deaf awareness training assignment, the deaf signer holds the capital in terms of having the knowledge and ability to train the participants in the session, and therefore be seen to have more power. A more complex example of the jostling of different capital might be described in an interpreted medical appointment where the interpreter is in a position of power simply because if they do not communicate the interaction well then the wrong treatment may be prescribed, therefore the doctor is reliant on their expertise. Simultaneously, the interpreter is aware of the doctor's own expertise and both the SLI and the doctor are looking to the patient (the expert on their own symptoms) to give them the needed answers to the questions being posed. Here we can envisage the capital being evaluated by each agent throughout the interaction.

Lacking capital is something that deaf signers have to contend with regularly, as a consequence of a deficient education system for many deaf people and a medical profession who diagnose deficiency early in life and reduce expectations. Additionally, living in a society which values able-bodied-ness, spoken language and hearing ability, all reduce the deaf signer's capital (see section 2.4 for a more in-depth discussion). Along

with habitus, capital becomes part of the equation that gives a person power in a particular field.

2.2.5 *Field*

Field, for Bourdieu, is the social space where agents bring their practice; this is where the interaction takes place. They bring to this social terrain their habitus and their capital. Field can be imagined as a literal field where a game is being played, where there are boundaries (like for example a football pitch) and there are rules for the game, rules that are not learned (and not articulated) but acquired through socialisation and educational experiences. The players of the game bring with them their own skills in the form of dispositions (habitus), their acquired advantages (capital) and they strategize in order to achieve their goals. Structures of power are at play on the field and the competitors are playing the game in order to gain more capital. Fields evolve however, they do not remain static but change over time so once again we are dealing with something that is dynamic. Agents bring their habitus to the field and enter it having or not having a “feel for the game” (Bourdieu 1980 [2008], p.66) and they may have some or complete mastery of the game. However, as Thomson (2008) describes to us:

unlike a carefully manicured football field, there is no level playing ground in a social field; players who begin with particular forms of capital are advantaged at the outset because the field depends on, as well as produces more of, that capital. Such lucky players are able to use their capital advantage to accumulate more and advance further (be more successful) than others. (Thomson 2008, p.69)

We can see that a person’s capital can privilege them in a particular field affording them opportunities that others do not have, this leads to the reproduction of social inequalities (Moore 2008, p.104): if you start the game with less than those you are playing with you are much more likely to gain less than them.

In the field of interpreting, the interpreter has power because of their linguistic capital and cultural capital which the monolinguals need and value. In any field there is domination and subordination and there are interactions, like medical appointments, where power structures are already at play prior to the addition of an interpreter’s presence. The overlapping of fields changes the power dynamics and requires the interpreter to manage the ‘new’ rules. Bourdieu refers to these situations as “zones of uncertainty” (Bourdieu 2000, p.157) due to the unclear position of the signed language

interpreting profession (see section 3.3.3 for more detail). This uncertainty produces a potential opportunity to disrupt established expectations about the rules of the game.

If a deaf sign language user has not been exposed to a fully accessible educational opportunity and perhaps had parents who did not know sign language they are more likely to have lower educational achievements (NDCS 2016), and they are more likely to have less access to the types of knowledge and experience that give them cultural capital to interact in the field of hearing society. A SLI is more likely to be privileged by having more capital due to a better education, full access to information throughout their childhood and youth and we can assume that they are gainfully employed as an interpreter. They therefore automatically have more economic, cultural and social capital relative to the deaf client. However, SLIs may not be entirely aware or conscious of the power they hold or how they acquired that power: in essence, how they became privileged.

Having established that there are different elements that a social agent brings to an interaction which interplay throughout that encounter, I would like to explore in more detail what capital hearing people bring to their encounters. In order to do this, I turn to work on privilege.

2.3 Privilege

In his book *Undoing Privilege* Bob Pease makes the connection between Bourdieu's work on the process of embodying dominant ideologies and the concept of privilege, he says, "[t]his concept of habitus can usefully explain the ways in which dominant groups come to internalise prejudice towards others." (Pease 2010, p.26). Ahmed (2007) concurs that the habitus usefully helps us describe the habits and routines that allow whiteness to be performed unconsciously.

2.3.1 What is Whiteness?

Whiteness is a construction of society, history and culture (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1998; Frankenberg 1993) rather than definable simply by skin colour. It is not a taxonomy that can be applied and it remains difficult to define because it is constantly changing in an effort to retain its power. Scholars agree, however, that it is a quality that some hold and others do not, and it has been constructed by Western culture and in particular American culture. Frankenberg (1993) describes whiteness as:

a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a ‘standpoint’, a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, ‘Whiteness’ refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (Frankenberg 1993, p.1)

Part of that standpoint is the belief that a white perspective is objective, and that white people are not racialized, in essence being ‘white’ is the unseen norm (at least to white people). It follows then, that white people believe that they can speak for everyone because they are “outside of culture” (DiAngelo 2011, p.59). “White supremacy” is the terminology of black scholar bell hooks (1989), which she uses to refer to the attitudes and behaviours of well-meaning white people who are not intentionally racist. She writes:

When liberal whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white-supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination (especially domination that involves coercive control), they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they profess to wish to see eradicated. (hooks 1989, p.113)

This structural discrimination, which appears to be unrecognisable to white people, but evident to people who are racialised (Ahmed 2007), becomes problematic for the fight against racism. Discourses of white supremacy are Western narratives which invoke their ‘truth’ in the Foucauldian sense and have power over and above subaltern discourses (Spivak, 1988). ‘Subalternity’ is a Gramscian term that refers to people on the fringes of society who have a lower status. Alternative, counter-discourses, which subvert white supremacy are barely heard in societies where the dominant discourse is a white supremacist one.

Subalternity has been applied to deaf signers by Ladd (2003) because he sees deaf signers as standing outside the dominant hearing discourses (see section 2.4.3). The discourse of white privilege, therefore, supports an argument for the concept of hearing privilege which I will discuss in more detail in 2.4.2.

2.3.2 White Privilege

Though it is important to analyse and challenge overt forms of discrimination, privilege points to a covert set of advantages. Whiteness scholars tend to agree that underlying systemic difficulties lie in the relationship between those who are subordinated and those who dominate, creating a privileged way of life for the dominators (Wildman and David 1997, p.317). The seminal work on white privilege began with Peggy McIntosh (1988) who introduced the metaphor of the invisible knapsack of privilege and began to unpack it to find out how it was constituted. She describes it thus:

I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks. (McIntosh 1988, p.97)

McIntosh began an untutored exploration into her experience of white privilege and made a list of the privileges she experienced that her African-American colleagues could not be sure to have. Her analysis led her to pinpoint once invisible privileges, now made visible. Some of the privileges she lists appear below:

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
[...]
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilisation," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of my race.
11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them. [...]
12. I can swear, or dress in secondhand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, poverty, or the illiteracy of my race. [...]
14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behaviour without being seen as a cultural outsider.

18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to “the person in charge,” I will be facing a person of my race. [...]

21. I can go home from most meetings of organisations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared. [...]

24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.

25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones. (excerpts from McIntosh 1988, pp.98,99)

These privileges are unearned and this forms a key concept in her work. She divides the privileges into two categories; those unearned privileges which in a just society ought to be distributed to as many people as possible, and those privileges which ‘confer dominance’ and ought to be rejected because they sustain current inequalities.

This concept of white privilege might be easily transposed onto the situation that I am exploring, that of ‘hearing privilege’, a term used in the United States by deaf signers and SLIs. SLIs are hearing and they hold privileges as a consequence. As I discuss white privilege further it is with the intention of finding a framework for considering hearing privilege more rigorously than the anecdotal references that can be found on blogs and vlogs in the US.

2.3.3 The Objectives of Whiteness Studies

Whiteness studies scholars do not simply wish to highlight systemic forms of oppression and make them visible but do something practical about them. However, what that action might be is left unclear. Those engaged in this endeavour are encouraged to “use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage” and “reconstruct power systems on a broader base” (McIntosh 1988, p.101). In the first instance, in order for society to reorganise itself there is a colossal re-education that needs to happen. The difficulty with unearned privilege is that it is invisible to the majority of people who hold it (Wildman and Davis 1997), and it serves the interests of those who hold it. If the majority of people believe that everyone has an equal opportunity in society (despite evidence to the contrary) there is a vested interest in maintaining this myth so that no work or discomfort is required in redressing the imbalance. Returning to Bourdieu’s

assessment of power we see the direct connections between privilege and symbolic power which is exercised with the collusion of those who are not aware that they have it (see section 2.2.2). Paulo Freire (1970) also discusses this problem in his work on critical education, he says:

One of gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. (1970, p.33)

This concept of bringing privilege into awareness and in order to act upon its destructive power is crucial to my research. I discuss Freire's work later in this chapter (in section 2.5.2) because I believe he gives more tangible tools for unveiling the behaviours that privileged people use to dominate others. A question that arises for me about this concept of privilege is: how can I analyse a phenomenon which is potentially hidden in the unconscious? This will have methodological implications which I discuss in section 3.3.2.

2.3.4 Criticisms

Whiteness Studies do not go uncriticised for refocusing the gaze back onto the dominant, oppressive group. As Pease asks, "[h]ow do you study whiteness without recentring white privilege?" (Pease 2010, p.124). Whiteness studies creates new opportunities for white people in academia and has the potential to give space to notions of racism as victimisation of white people. Even if this is not the intention of white scholars who are trying to make whiteness more visible, Ahmed (a scholar who identifies as being a woman-of-colour) makes the critical point that "Whiteness studies makes that which is invisible visible: though for non-whites, the project has to be described differently: it would be about making what can already be seen, visible in a different way" (2004, para. 3). It is important to respect the foundational work by academics and thinkers who are not white like Patricia Hill-Collins, bell hooks, Sara Ahmed, Audre Lourde and Toni Morrison and remember the objectives of whiteness studies so as not to lose perspective or collude in further oppressing racialised people.

In discussions about the privilege of hearing academics in Deaf Studies, similar arguments have been alluded to by Emery and O'Brien (2014) (see also Sutton-Spence and West 2011). Sutton-Spence and West (2011) suggest that room needs to be made to explore the social construction of hearingness, like whiteness studies has done, but also

the positioning of enlightened, hearing academics to be involved in Deaf Studies. However, Emery and O'Brien argue that as Deaf Studies is not thoroughly established as a field of study it is under threat and this focus on hearingness could obfuscate the matter further:

[Deaf Studies] is therefore at risk of losing its radical, emancipatory focus and becoming another branch of mainstream, hearing-centric social science in which the Deaf person is the object of research and has no control over the nature and direction of the research that is relevant to their language, community, and culture, something we believe is incompatible with the emancipatory roots of Deaf studies. (Emery and O'Brien 2014, p.29)

However, I believe it is important to analyse hearing privilege because many professionals work alongside deaf people and I would argue that critical reflection is a vital part of their training. To return to the arguments of whiteness studies again to further my point, white people have a responsibility to reflect seriously on the systems of discrimination we sustain. Pease asks the important question, "[t]o what extent can we charge those who are oppressed with not doing enough to challenge their oppression, while those who are privileged have barely begun to acknowledge the role they play in oppressing others?" (Pease 2010, p.6). Whiteness studies must focus on the responsibility of white people for maintaining white privilege and continue to pursue the connection between racism and white privilege. Therefore, listening to and being informed by the voices of racialised people is a critical focus for whiteness studies. Furthermore, I would venture, in the mapping of white privilege onto the hearing situation, deaf signers must remain front and central or we risk creating more weapons for the arsenal that attacks deaf people's identities and rights.

The process of unveiling this privilege to those who hold it and then dismantling it will undoubtedly be met by resistance, something McIntosh (1988) feels is evidenced in her work around male privilege. Smith emphasises this resistance by concluding that "privilege reinforces privilege, and denies access to those who seek its power" (2004, Section 'Whiteness Theory', para. 8). In the next section I discuss this resistance further.

2.3.5 White Fragility

The reluctance to accept that white privilege is happening is evidenced by scholars; in fact, it can be more than reluctance, it can be a resistance and the desire to

protect against racial discomfort (DiAngelo 2011). DiAngelo describes an “insulated environment of racial privilege” which “builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress” (DiAngelo 2011, p.55), and this lack of ability to tolerate racial stress she calls ‘white fragility’. This fragility manifests itself in anger, guilt, fear (among other behaviours) that white people express when faced with racial stress. Racial stress might involve any type of challenge to the dominant group suggesting that they are in receipt of privileges or behave in racist ways that they might not even perceive. DiAngelo suggests that white fragility may be a product of Bourdieu’s habitus as it is an unconscious strategy utilised to protect a position of power in order to re-find ‘equilibrium’ in the habitus. This results in “resistance towards the trigger, shutting down and/or tuning out, indulgence in emotional incapacitation such as guilt or ‘hurt feelings’, exiting, or a combination of these responses” (ibid 2011, p.58). Real engagement with the racial issues at hand is not considered when white fragility is operating. As a consequence of white people being comfortable most of the time, racial discomfort can be a shock to the system, the system that their habitus is at pains to keep in balance.

Because of white social, economic and political power within the white dominant culture, whites are positioned to legitimise people of color’s assertions of racism. Yet whites are the least likely to see, understand, or be invested in validating those assertions and being honest about their consequences, which leads whites to claim that they disagree with perspectives that challenge their worldview, when in fact, they don’t understand the perspective. (DiAngelo 2011, p.61)

White privilege is a perspective that is not easy to disrupt, but for a more equitable society deconstructing white privilege is essential. Not only does white privilege oppress and diminish people who do not fall into the category of ‘white’, but according to McIntosh it “distort[s] the humanity” of the privileged as well (McIntosh 1988, p.100), something which Freire (1970) attests to also (see section 2.5.2). In her analysis of white privilege McIntosh does not neglect the intersection with other privileges (class, gender etc..) and promotes the idea that these other types of advantage need to be examined as well, including the advantage of “physical ability” (ibid 2002, p.101).

2.3.6 Intersectional Privileges

The term ‘intersectionality’ was introduced by the critical race theorist and black feminist Crenshaw in 1989 when she highlighted the marginalisation of black women within antiracist legislation and also within feminist, antiracist politics (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays and Tomlinson 2013). Intersectionality is a theory that is necessarily interdisciplinary and productive because it can be applied to new situations and intersections of marginalization in fact, it is described as a “work-in-progress” (ibid 2013, pp.304) precisely because it is an ongoing analysis. The study of hearing privilege (see section 2.4.2) seems an obvious place to evolve the analysis of intersectionality in order to make space for critical thinking about how being deaf can be a site for intersectional discrimination.

In Pease’s study of privilege, he covers class privilege, the dominance of Western culture and thought, male privilege and heterosexual privilege. He also discusses able-bodied privilege. Pease’s focus is on the norm of the able-body and deviance from this norm as a loss of privilege. The societal belief that our bodies determine our place in the hierarchy of privileges whether through gender, race, sexuality or disability stands in contrast to the alternative understanding that these categories are socially constructed (rather than physical traits that inherently hold inferiority or superiority). Pease highlights, “if the body is a site for *doing* privilege, it has implications for how we *undo* it” (Pease 2010, p.149). For example, illness and disability are often seen by society as a failing by the individual and something that needs to be fixed by professionals whereas if we think of society as constructing disability (a concept known as the social model of disability) then the failure does not lie in the individual. Pease goes on to incorporate Bourdieu into his analysis and describes the concept of ‘physical capital’ (embodied, for example, in sporting ability or attractiveness) which can be converted into an increase in status, power and monetary gain or employment (Pease 2010). Evidenced in work by Edwards and Imrie (2003), this concept of physical capital from Bourdieu is useful in understanding the discrimination against disabled people and the privilege of the able-bodied.

The intersectional nature of discrimination and oppression is also discussed by Thompson (2007). Though he does not use the terminology of privilege specifically, he is discussing the same concept in his book *Power and Empowerment* which is aimed at social workers. Instead of privilege he focuses on the ‘un’privileged or disadvantaged people and the oppressions they face. Thompson lists several areas of discrimination in the UK context; sexism, racism, age-ism, ableism, discrimination linked to sexual

identity, religion and class. All of these types of discriminations can intersect with each other at different times. To be privileged in a situation is to not be subjected to these types of discrimination, something which fluctuates depending on where one might be and who one might be with. For example, a person who benefits from white privilege in the UK may still feel discriminated against because they are a woman, or homosexual or both. Intersectional disadvantage is an important consideration for interpreters who work with deaf signers who are often perceived to be disabled (see section 2.4), but who also have other characteristics which impact on their lives.

2.3.7 Ableism and Disableism

Interestingly, perhaps, there is little published specifically on ‘non-disabled privilege or ‘able-bodied privilege’ within Disability Studies. However, there are scholars who write about disablism. One definition of disablism is “the social beliefs and actions that oppress/exclude/disadvantage people with impairments” (Thomas 2007, p.13). This appears to be akin to racism or outright acts of discrimination against disabled people.

Alternatively, Shakespeare suggests that the disability scholar should interrogate the ‘other’, meaning the able-bodied, and “deconstruct the normality-which-is-to-be-assumed” (Shakespeare 1996, p.96) thus looking at the underlying construction of able-bodiedness which creates privilege. This is a call to analyse the discrimination that is called ableism. Ableism is different from disablism: it is defined as the construction of the body in its most perfect form and the societal value placed upon this which in turn devalues the disabled body (Pease 2010, p.156). “A chief feature of an ableist viewpoint” Campbell tells us, “is a belief that impairment (irrespective of ‘type’) is inherently negative which should, if the opportunity presents itself, be ameliorated, cured or indeed eliminated. What remain unspeakable are readings of the disabled body presenting life with impairment as an animating, affirmative modality of subjectivity” (Campbell 2008, p.152, 153). Ableism, therefore, echoes the tyranny of the ‘normal’ as able-bodied people assume and aspire to an idea of the body which fits criteria that do not account for the diversity and difference between all bodies and their temporary able-bodied state.

Notably, unlike other forms of discrimination, ableism is in fact something that an able-bodied person could experience at any time. The ageing process of all humans ensures that for most people impairment is not far away. Furthermore, as Gordon and Rosenblum (2001) note, men do not have to be worried about becoming women and white people do not need to be concerned about becoming black but for non-disabled people

the possibility of becoming disabled is a reality. The fear of the able-bodied person is at the heart of ableism because the belief in the invincibility of the body and denial of impairment harms not only disabled people but also those who hold this belief. As Hughes (2007) suggests, to understand able-bodied privilege an analysis of the pathology of *non-disablement* is necessary.

2.3.8 Able-bodied Privilege

The privileges of the able-bodied person have been documented by May-Machunda (2005) in an unpublished essay. Like McIntosh's they are examples of what one might expect as an able-bodied person. They include:

4. I am not dependent on hiring strangers and acquaintances to assist me with my daily routines and private matters.
5. I can be fairly sure that when people look at me, they don't assume that I would be better off dead or that I am a social burden because of my disabilities. [...]
8. I can be fairly sure that the first reaction to me is not pity or revulsion due to the condition of my body. [...]
13. I can anticipate being employed and be perceived as capable of working.
14. I can expect to succeed or fail in my job or life without it reflecting on all people with similar difficulties. [...]
19. I can see successful role models with similar abilities to mine in a wide variety of careers.
20. I can spontaneously participate in activities. I do not have to preplan routine trips. [...]
29. I can assume that public safety information, e.g. Traffic signs, curb cuts, detour information, will be accessible to me. [...]
31. I can assume that I do not have to make advance reservations in order to attend most public events or facilities. [...]
34. I can assume that when people look at the condition of my body, they will not question the appropriateness of my right to be a sexual being or a parent. (excerpts from May-Machunda 2005, pp.75-78)

Many of these privileges are directly applicable to hearing people's privileges in relation to deaf people, which is another reason why this discussion of ableism has significance

for this study. SLIs will, at times, be aware of ableist attitudes towards deaf people that may overlap or be distinct from audist attitudes (see section 2.4.1).

One question that arises from an analysis of able-bodied privilege is, for Pease (2010), what and whether there is a role for able-bodied people in challenging it. Some disabled scholars regard this desire with suspicion and suspect an attitude of charity from able-bodied people. Other scholars believe that able-bodied scholars and allies can analyse and challenge disabling policies (Drake 1997; Shakespeare 2006). Uncovering able privilege requires able-bodied people to recognise their privilege and work to make others aware. This means becoming a disability ally, accepting the frailty of the human body and analysing ‘body normativity’ are all parts of this project (Pease 2010).

What has been important in the study of privilege is that recognising privilege for what it is, is one step towards undoing it (Frankenberg 1993). Undoing privilege can happen at different levels: personal, cultural and institutional. However, they reinforce each other so action on these three fronts needs to take place simultaneously (Pease 2010). This sentiment is reinforced by the work of social work scholar Neil Thompson (2011) as he exhorts professionals to consider his ‘personal, cultural, structural’ (PCS) framework for critically reflecting on their work (see section 2.5.1).

Having established that there is intersectionality between discriminations and also privileges, I want to turn now to focus in detail on Deaf Studies’ contribution to the debates about audism and hearing privilege. This will allow me to contextualise the profession of SLIs, who work with a client base who often consider themselves to be a cultural and linguistic minority who undergo discrimination regularly.

2.4 Deaf Studies

Deaf Studies is an academic discipline that focuses on deaf ontologies and epistemologies (Young and Temple 2014; Kusters, De Meulder and O’Brien 2017). It is founded in the belief that deaf signers are not deficient, or disabled. Since the recognition of sign languages as fully grammatical, ‘natural’ languages, deaf signers began to consider themselves to be members of a linguistic minority with their own cultural practices. Deaf Studies incorporates linguistics, deaf education, sociology, psychology, anthropology and more (Marschark and Humphries 2010; Kusters, De Meulder and O’Brien 2017). For this study I will be focusing on the sociological aspects of Deaf Studies in an attempt to explore the discourses of power that frame the lives of deaf signers. The study of deaf ontologies and epistemologies gives us a lens through which to see hearing privilege because without Deaf Studies we would not be able to discuss

hearing privilege at all. In this section of the literature review I examine theories coming from Deaf Studies that situate my own view of how deaf signers can be understood.

As Deaf Studies began to blossom in the 1970s and 80s the terminology of D/deaf was established by James Woodward in 1975 (Woodward and Horejes 2016). Subsequent academics followed his lead (Padden and Humphries 1988, 2005; Ladd 2003; Lane 1999) and used small 'd' deaf to denote audiologically deaf people versus capital 'D' Deaf to denote culturally 'Deaf' signers. Small 'd' deaf people are described solely by their condition of hearing impairment whereas culturally 'Deaf' people are considered to be a subgroup of deaf people. Capital 'D' Deaf people are those who use sign language and are members of the signed language-using community and also understand 'Deaf' culture (Napier 2002; Padden and Humphries 2005). This 'culture' has been explored and described by many deaf-signing and hearing scholars (Padden and Humphries 1988, 2005; Lane 1999; Ladd 2003; Higgins 1980). However, it should be noted that Turner (1994) instigated an extensive debate about the meaning of 'culture' and whether there is, in fact, a singular 'deaf culture' in the journal *Sign Language Studies* 1994, Vols 83-8. More recently, this debate has been taken on by deaf scholars Kusters, De Meulder and O'Brien (2017). The benefits of this approach are enumerated by Padden and Humphries (2005) as follows: signing deaf people are able to separate themselves from non-signing people with hearing impairments when discussing their needs and their ways of living; the cultural model also allows for them to be included and respected as a minority group like others in the world, who have a different language and cultural practices. Political activism is also made possible through this model because it provides a framework for campaigning for human rights. Finally, this framing offers a compelling place and sense of belonging for deaf signers in their community where otherwise they may feel like 'deficient' hearing people.

Leeson and Napier (2016) choose to refrain from using the d/Deaf convention as they feel that the membership of the Deaf community has evolved and become more complex in recent years and they do not want to judge the linguistic or cultural identity of individual deaf people (2016, p.2). Another alternative perspective of this type of framing comes from Kusters, De Meulder and O'Brien (2017) when they argue:

[t]he d/Deaf distinction creates or perpetuates a *dichotomy* between deaf and Deaf people (even when trying to be inclusive by writing 'd/Deaf'), and it has caused practices and experiences of exclusion. This dichotomy is, in fact, an *oversimplification* of what is an increasingly complex set of identities and language

practices, and the multiple positionalities/multimodal language use shown is impossible to represent with a simplified binary. (2017, pp.13, 14)

They posit that we need a more inclusive term with ‘more expansive possibilities’. They choose to use ‘deaf’ and suggest that ‘deaf signers’ is a possible option when distinguishing deaf people who use sign language. I am adopting the practice of using ‘deaf signers’ to denote audiologically deaf people who use a sign language as their preferred language. I do this chiefly to avoid judgment about people’s cultural and linguistic identity, as Napier and Leeson (2016) do and to distinguish signed language users from deaf people more generally but also from hearing signers.

Key concepts that have been explored in Deaf Studies that are pertinent to my study include audism (2.4.1), hearing/phonocentric/audiocentric privilege (2.4.2), deafhood (2.4.3) and deaf gain (2.4.4). I will explore each of these areas in the following sections.

2.4.1 Audism

One early theoretical development in Deaf Studies was the formalising of the term ‘audism’, which stems from terms like ‘racism’ but applies to the discrimination that deaf people face. An example of audism is given by Eckert and Rowley (2013). They describe the common experience of a deaf shopper who does not understand a cashier, but when the cashier realises that the customer is deaf the cashier will not write down what they were trying to communicate saying “No, no that’s OK” (Eckert and Rowley 2013, p.2). This along with other examples, including police officers killing deaf civilians (when they do not obey commands that they cannot hear) and the incarceration of deaf people in asylums for the criminally insane (in the USA) are provided to demonstrate the on-going situation that deaf people find themselves in (Eckert and Rowley 2013). In the UK audism is also being evidenced in prisons through unequal treatment of deaf people (McCulloch 2012) and in the discrimination against deaf people in the work place (Turner 2006). Furthermore, Deaf Studies scholars would argue that audism is being practiced through the educational policies and practices of the government (Ladd 2003).

Audism has been described and applied in different ways in Deaf Studies. The term was coined by a deaf scholar, Tom Humphries (1977), in his doctoral dissertation. Audism, for Humphries, is defined as “[t]he notion that one is superior based on one’s ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears” (Humphries 1977, p.2). Humphries is interested in the ways in which this prejudice impacts on deaf people’s lives

not only through discrimination but also from audist behaviours manifesting in deaf people against other deaf people and the way that it:

appears when deaf and hearing people have no trust in the deaf people's ability to control their own lives and form systems and organisations to take charge of the deaf as a group to seek social and political change. [...] It appears in many other ways subtly and obviously, directly and indirectly, intentionally and unintentionally, consciously and subconsciously. (Humphries 1997, p.13, 14)

Humphries documents some of his experience of the unveiling of his own audist attitudes, which is reminiscent of McIntosh's 'untutored' recognition of her own white privileges (see section 2.3.2). Ultimately, in coining the term he finds it useful for naming the individual behaviours and practices that he has been submitted to but also internalised. He does not describe the systemic nature of this discrimination though he acknowledges that it is embedded in our society when he says, "[b]eing hearing or raised as hearing does not automatically make one an audist but given our society and its views on deafness, it is almost a certainty" (Humphries 1977, p.12). The term audism was later adapted by Harlan Lane (1999), a hearing scholar, who applied Humphries' concept to the "paternalistic, hearing-centred endeavor that professes to serve deaf people" (Lane 1999, p.43). Lane's acerbic attack on systemic audist practices lifted the lid on hearing ethnocentric perspectives of deaf people as inferior, unsocialised, linguistically poor and morally underdeveloped. Lane situates the barrier for deaf people in institutionalised audism which locates the problem of deafness within the deaf individual rather than in limiting beliefs and the undervaluing of a culture, language and way of life. He writes; "[a]udism is the corporate institution for dealing with Deaf people" (Lane 1999, p.43). By 'dealing with' Lane means the ways that institutions talk about deaf people, educate professionals about them, make policies about their schooling etc. And interestingly in his list of professionals who 'exercise authority over' deaf people he includes interpreters (Lane 1999, p.43). He is clear to express that hearing people are colonisers of deaf people, and that there is a conflict between the ways deaf people are dealt with and the ways they wish to be treated, something that Ladd (2003) supports in his own analysis of deaf culture and Deafhood. In his analysis, Lane focuses on educational institutions who advocate an oralist approach and medical institutions that advocate 'cures' for deafness, in particular cochlea implants, as sites of obvious audist practices.

This concept of institutional audism is adapted for the British context by Turner (2006) in research conducted on deaf people in the workplace. To a degree, Turner is taking Lane's somewhat amorphous terminology and clarifying it. Lane is interested in an overarching, systemic audism that permeates society and structures the lives of deaf people. Turner takes the term 'institutional audism' and refines it by applying it to a specific context. He sees it as the explanation for the unconscious discriminatory practices that are occurring in workplace settings that are not the outcome of individual hearing people's conscious beliefs but woven into the fabric of those institutions. I would argue that these unconscious practices are an aspect of people's habituses and ingrained into the field of practice (see section 2.2.2 on Bourdieu). Turner's research data comes from deaf employees who described experiencing daily microaggressions³, which excluded them from information and denied their promotion within the institutions. This type of audism is firmly rooted in the established norms and practices of the institutions (Turner 2006). The McPherson Inquiry into racism within the police force (providing a distinctively British context for the understanding of the term) informed the analysis of his data and Turner found parallels with institutional racism. In doing so he stressed the systematic tendencies to treat deaf people unequally that are communicated through the institution and embodied by the outcomes of processes and procedures that are enacted by employees. Here we see the combination of Foucauldian technologies of power at play (Lane's audism), manifesting in the techniques used by agents who 'articulate' that power unknowingly (Turner's institutional audism).

Eckert and Rowley (2013) take Lane's concept of institutional audism a step further, as they see it, giving it this definition: "a structural system of exploitative advantage that focuses on and perpetuates the subordination of Deaf Communities of origin, language, and culture" (Eckert and Rowley 2013, p.106). Furthermore, Eckert (2010) transposes the concept of 'laissez-faire' racism onto audism. Eckert says, "[l]aissez faire audism is an attempt to extricate the dominant hearing majority of guilt" (Eckert 2010, p.13). He makes the argument that rather than facing up to the social inequality that exists, hearing people rationalise the continued inequality by saying that it is the fault of the deaf people who are languishing in their own inaction and sense of injustice. This clearly relates to the arguments from whiteness studies that claim that white privilege is self-sustaining and will continue to find ways to maintain the superiority of whites (see section 2.3.1)

³ Microaggression is a term coined by a Harvard University professor and psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce. It refers to the casual degradation of marginalized group members.

and displays the concept of hearing fragility (see section 2.3.5 on White Fragility). Having established the concept of discrimination against deaf people in the form of audism, we can now turn to the discussion of the privilege of hearing people.

2.4.2 Hearing/Phonocentric/Audiocentric Privilege

The jump from audism to hearing privilege is made by Bauman (2004). Drawing on Wellman's (1993) work on racism he says:

Here we may amend Wellman's definition of racism to add a new dimension to the definition of Audism as 'a system of advantage based on hearing ability'.

This definition allows us to detect the privilege allotted to hearing people. (Bauman 2004, p.241)

Bauman gives a specific example of how this privilege plays out not just in the daily lives of deaf signers living in a hearing society but also in primarily signing deaf institutions like Gallaudet University⁴ where hearing staff members benefit from their hearing status regularly. He goes on to state that audism is acted out even more in institutions that aim to provide a service to deaf people; educational settings and medical environments (Bauman 2004). In contrast to disability studies, Bauman assigns the origins of audism and hearing privilege to the longstanding notion that to be human is to be able to speak. Bauman reconceptualises Derrida's (1974) critique of phonocentrism to incorporate a Deaf Studies perspective. Derrida describes phonocentrism as the privileging of spoken words over written text because spoken words are considered to be an immediate expression of the self, whereas written words are a tool to capture meaning (Wortham 2010). Agreeing with Derrida, Bauman explains, "[p]honocentrism has such a thorough grasp on the Western tradition that we cannot see all the ways that speech has constructed the world as we know it." (Bauman 2004, p.243). He gives as an example of phonocentrism the central focus that spoken languages have taken in the study of linguistics and Saussure's claims that "sound is an internal, intrinsic element to language" (Bauman 2004, p.243) to the exclusion of sign languages and other forms of written language. This application of phonocentrism to the analysis of audism essentially asks what values, beliefs or unconscious 'norms' underlie the systems and behaviours of our society. Bauman presents this analysis of Derrida as contributing to 'metaphysical

⁴ Gallaudet University is an institution where a American Sign Language is the language of instruction.

audism'. Alongside Humphries' original definition, focusing on the privilege of those able to hear, and Lane's development of the idea of institutionalized audism, Bauman feels that all of these contribute to audist practices in Western societies today.

Bauman's re-imagining of Derrida's analysis does not go without critique. Shultz Myers and Fernandes' (2010) rejection of Bauman's argument for the primacy of phonocentrism is based on five problems that they find in his, as they see it, flawed reasoning and uncritical acceptance of Derrida's claims of phonocentrism. They infer from his article that Bauman wishes to turn the tables and privilege signed language instead of speech. They are concerned that the metaphor of colonial relationships between hearing oppressors and oppressed deaf people simply continues the binaries that have been set up and does not allow for fresh ways of thinking about a 'post-speech-only world' (Shultz Myers and Fernandes 2010, p.41). While, in my view, some of their concerns are valid, they perhaps characterise Bauman's intentions in the extreme. Phonocentrism is a part of a larger whole that constitutes audism and it cannot be denied that "[e]ducational practices such as oralism, Total Communication, and mainstreaming are the institutionalization of our phonocentric and audist metaphysical orientation; the practices of these institutions then beget individual audist attitudes through daily practices, rituals, and disciplining Deaf bodies into becoming closer to normal hearing bodies" (Bauman 2000, p.245). The enveloping of phonocentrism into the concept of audism, as Humphries intended, seems to add a valuable dimension of audist practices that needs to be further considered.

Eckert and Rowley (2013) choose to focus on 'audiocentric' privilege explicitly. They write, "Deaf people are assaulted with audiocentric prejudice and discrimination on a daily basis" (Eckert and Rowley 2013, p.105). They are keen to elaborate on the many ways that deaf people experience audism, whether covert, overt or aversive. Overt discrimination is deliberate and public, covert discrimination is intentional but subtle whereas aversive discrimination is subtle and unintentional and usually comes from a place of privilege. They redefine some of the concepts already discussed, in particular ways, for example, they redefine Bauman's metaphysical audism as "a stratifying schema that promotes differential treatment by linking human identity and autonomous being with audiocentric assumptions and attitudes that are used to rationalise the subordination of Deaf Communities of origin, language and culture" (Eckert and Rowley 2013, p.107). They do this in order to assert that it is not only the focus on spoken language that creates discrimination for deaf signers, because some people who learn speech and become deaf later still experience discrimination (ibid 2013).

In their elaboration on the concepts of overt, covert and aversive audism Eckert and Rowley describe aversive audism as “...concern[ing] a principle of equality accompanied by contradictions and high levels of anxiety when around Deaf people” (ibid 2013:109) and as an example they describe interpreters who filter the information they interpret without permission from the deaf participant. Their assumption is that interpreters value equality for everyone but that this aversive audism can exist alongside their desire for equality. This is an intriguing idea which merits more research.

The concept of hearing privilege surfaces in a masters thesis by Tuccoli (2008) who interviewed hearing students at Gallaudet University and found evidence that they were unable to describe their hearing privilege, or were unaware of it, despite being taught about audism in early classes during their degree (Tuccoli 2008). She also found evidence that deaf students were very aware of hearing privileges. In Tuccoli’s autoethnographic study at Gallaudet campus she provides descriptions of manifestations of what I am calling ‘hearing fragility’ (see section 2.3.5 on white fragility), the notion of resistance to acknowledging hearing privilege. Hearing students who are stimulated to discuss ‘Are you an Audist?’ on a noticeboard in the residences give clear examples of deflecting their discomfort with the subject matter. They resist the identification of audist with different strategies, including appealing for sympathy by presenting themselves as victims or expressing that they feel oppressed. This gives us evidence that understanding about audism is no grounds for understanding their own hearing privilege. If we transpose this onto SLIs we can assume that not everyone who has gained an understanding of audism and audist practices will accept their own hearing privilege.

Understanding hearing privilege is vital for understanding your own position of power in a situation where deaf signers are present. My research explores these positions of power and is therefore interested in whether SLIs are conscious of their hearing privilege. This is not easily explored as it is aversive and unconscious. SLIs in general have a level of awareness about audist practices (whether they label them audist or not), but is this enough for them to recognise when they themselves articulate these audist practices?

To counteract the experience of audism on deaf signer’s lives, the concept of Deafhood (Ladd 2003) was developed. I turn now to Ladd’s ideas in order to give another perspective on the possible ways of reframing deafness as something other than deficiency.

2.4.3 Deafhood

Deafhood, a concept formulated by Paddy Ladd (2003) is another focus for Deaf Studies. Deafhood is a positive reframing of being deaf: the idea that a deaf body/person has potential beyond how medical descriptions frame that person (Ladd 2003; Kusters & De Meulder 2013). It is the continual development and becoming of people who are deaf but find their identity within communities of deaf people who consider themselves to be a cultural-linguistic minority. Equally Deafhood is a search for self-actualisation and a rejection of the oppressive practices of the hearing majority or their hegemonic discourses. Ladd's analysis relies on theory arising from subaltern studies. Subalternity, a Gramscian term taken up by those who research postcolonialism, refers to groups who have no access to hegemonic power, particularly in the academy (Ladd 2003, p.81). Ladd is concerned to document the views of deaf signers who have not been represented in academia and to offer a counter-narrative. He states that he is focussed on "those subaltern Deaf people (that is those whose lack of English-literacy skills rendered them effectively monolingual) are not only captured, but set in relationship to the actions of any (comparatively elite) bilingual Deaf people" (Ladd 2003, p.82). For Ladd the subaltern is not only a deaf signer but one who has not had the opportunity to learn how to access the dominant language.

I would suggest that there are other subaltern deaf people, who may be monolingual but may also simply have intersecting characteristics which combined with deafness situate them in disempowered positions. Examples include those with mental health disorders, those from religious minorities or deafblind people (see section 2.3.6 on intersectional characteristics). Fellingner, Holzinger and Pollard (2012) claim that there is a higher prevalence of mental health disorders in deaf signing people than the hearing population. They also suggest that about a quarter of people with a hearing loss (including deaf signers) have additional disabilities. They state that deaf children who cannot make themselves understood within their families are four times more likely to experience mental health disorders, emphasizing the point that these children are disadvantaged by the societal structures that do not promote sign language early in life, not by their deafness *per se*. Additionally, it has been documented that there is a higher prevalence of deaf signers, compared to hearing spoken language users, who have language dysfluency (Crump and Glickman 2011). Dysfluent people are "not skilled users of the language. Their communication in the language is unclear, or to the native's 'ear', peculiar [...] their language is non-grammatical, non-idiomatic, or odd" (ibid 2011, p.1). Crump and Glickman (2011) explain that many of the causes of deafness in children

have other effects, like cognitive and developmental delays, some of which can impact on language development. They also emphasize that it is difficult to separate out these delays from lack of exposure to a signed language at an early age as the cause of language dysfluency. Clearly, in their view, lack of exposure to an accessible language early on in a child's life is an important factor when trying to understand this higher prevalence of language dysfluency. Through no fault of their own and in fact probably as a result of audist practices, these deaf signers are less able to access or produce language effectively and therefore could be considered even more 'voiceless'. Additionally, Pollard and Barnett (2009) discuss what Pollard has termed a "fund-of-information deficit" (Pollard 1998) which is a limited base of knowledge about the world in general. This can be a problem for some deaf signers despite normal IQ levels and educational capacity and is due to a lack of access to information. In a phonocentric society access to conversations, announcements, radio and television is not guaranteed for a deaf child or adult. If you add to this low educational attainment (NDCS 2016) and literacy levels, then the fund-of-information deficit could be considerable. To return to Ladd's discussion about subalterns, I suggest that deaf signers with intersecting characteristics (including dysfluency and fund-of-information deficits), which make them more vulnerable to discrimination, should be considered within this subaltern status.

Deafhood is an aspirational concept, it outlines what Ladd calls the 'larger Deaf self' and points to ways of being that were possible once and could be again if deaf signers are given opportunities and throw off the oppressive beliefs that they have taken on themselves (Ladd 2003). It is a positive reframing of deafness and a way of looking forward optimistically, rather than a negative analysis of audism in all its varieties which might lead one to feel hopeless. By deconstructing the hegemonic discourses that govern the lives of deaf signers, Ladd attempts to make deaf signers more visible.

Notwithstanding this positive outlook, Ladd does not shirk away from the difficult work of analysing colonialist oppression, something Lane initiates and Ladd expands on. A post-colonial reading of Ladd's 'Deaf community' is a powerful tool for revealing oppressive practices and offering liberation. His analysis focuses on the enforcement of hearing cultural practices on deaf people, for example oral schools. Ladd is sensitive to the potential for essentialism to paralyse the exercise of this colonialist analysis. Following Spivak (1990), he opts for a 'strategic essentialism' that allows for space in which to develop deaf narratives to oppose "Hearing Supremacy" (Ladd, 2003, p.80) which might later be refined and 'de-essentialised'. This concept is key to my analysis because by strategically essentialising the deaf signing community it is possible to

analyse hearing privilege, which is otherwise invisible. If we cannot first see deaf signers as a cultural and linguistic minority group with a distinct perspective, this comparison cannot exist. There are problems with this approach, explicated by Kusters and De Meulder (2013), because it forces definitions on the deaf signing community that do not always sit comfortably with all deaf people; however, Kusters and De Meulder conclude, and I concur, that there needs to be a balance between essentialising and hyper-individualism because the former benefits the community politically and the latter allows for identity development.

Hearing privilege fits into this ethos of Deafhood because it analyses the part of hearing people in the experience of deaf signer's lives and asks questions about audist ways of thinking and behaving that continue to be oppressive. Hearing privilege is a way of focusing the attention of hearing people on to an under-acknowledged and often unconscious habitus that they carry around and ask them to critically explore the underlying assumptions. It also prompts the continual development of this analysis (both individually and collectively) which allows for a deepening understanding and a dynamic understanding that moves with the development of Deafhood. It should not, however, be done in isolation from deaf signers.

2.4.4 Deaf Gain

Within the concept of Deafhood Ladd talks about deaf possibilities; the concept that if we look back to a time when oralism had not taken over the lives of deaf signers we can glean an understanding of the values and skills that deaf signers hold and can offer majority culture. Deafhood allows for "the academy and society" to be informed "of the benefits of understanding and absorbing some of the cultural features of tactile, visuo-gesturally skilled deaf communities, the biodiversity of human experience can be positively valorized in the coming years" (Ladd 2005, p.17).

This aspect of Deafhood is described in more depth as Deaf Gain, by Bauman and Murray (2009, 2013). They develop the idea that instead of focusing on hearing loss (a medical deficiency) society could choose to focus on Deaf Gain. Essentially, this means exploring the aspects of the deaf experience that can be viewed positively and as a contribution to bio and cultural diversity. They define three ways in which deaf people contribute to diversity: cognitive gains (enhanced peripheral vision, better facial recognition and a visual orientation); creative gains (transnational communication in the

form of International Sign⁵); and cultural gains (Sign Language Poetry and the insights coming from the study of Deaf Space) (Bauman and Murray 2009; 2013). In promoting the notion of Deaf Gain, Bauman and Murray hope to change the deficiency lens that the majority hearing society uses to understand deafness to one that respects and celebrates diversity. This counter discourse offers a positive framing of deafness that can be liberatory. Counter discourses help to expose hegemonic discourses that frame the ways we think about deaf people's lives.

2.4.5 Hearing People and the Deaf Community

The question then for hearing people is how they fit into or connect with deaf signing communities? This has been discussed by various scholars and attempts have been made to create models for how deaf community membership operates. There is no doubt that there is a "fractious interdependence" (Napier, 2001) between hearing people and deaf communities. Baker and Cokely (1980) place an emphasis on the attitude of a person. This attitudinal deafness is critical to membership, but they postulate that there are four other characteristics at play: linguistic ability, political involvement, social ease and audiological status (Baker & Cokely 1980). This last characteristic precludes hearing people obviously, but they feel that with the appropriate attitude and a minimum of two characteristics a hearing person can be considered to be part of the deaf community though not a core member. This model of how the deaf community operates is simply that, a model, however it gives an indication of how hearing people are perceived by the deaf community.

Bienvenu (1987) develops a notion of 'third culture' which describes a space in which hearing sign language users can exist. When deaf signers and hearing people are in the third culture they are no longer fully a part of the deaf signing or hearing cultures. Sherwood (1987) describes how the professionalizing of interpreters, as opposed to deaf community-reared children of deaf signing adults, opened the doors to people who had no specific connection to the deaf community, and therefore no cultural understanding of deaf signers. Professionalisation also led to training courses and qualifications where deaf cultural aspects needed to be taught, so that hearing interpreters could manage the cultural mediation required for successful interpretations. Sherwood (1987) also describes the difficulties that were arising at that time as a result of clashes between deaf

⁵ "International Sign (IS) is a form of contact signing used in international settings where people who are deaf attempt to communicate with others who do not share the same conventional, native signed language" (Whynot 2016)

signers and hearing interpreters due to ethnocentrism (the belief that one's own culture is superior to another). This resulted in qualified interpreters leaving the profession regularly. Clearly this "fractious interdependence" between the deaf community and hearing people, particularly interpreters, is a cause for concern. If ethnocentric beliefs are causing rifts between hearing people and deaf signers then there are some underlying issues that have yet to be resolved.

Having looked at various themes that Deaf Studies has brought to light I will turn from theoretical concepts to more practical tools for transforming the status quo and moving towards liberation and equality. This final section of chapter 2 will have implications for the methodological framework that I intend to use and describe further in chapter 4.

2.5 Emancipation: Practical steps towards promoting equality

In this section I have chosen to look at two scholar-practitioners who offer concrete tools for action. Neil Thompson is a scholar in the field of social work and Paulo Freire is a well-known scholar in the field of education and community development. Both of them offer ways of thinking about professional practice that can transform unintentional collusion with ideological discourses that maintain current inequalities and oppressive structures that deaf people undergo. Though neither of these scholar-practitioners work within the field of Deaf studies or interpreting studies they provide a framework for thinking about the promotion of equality and the fight for liberation that deaf signers and those in solidarity with them can use to further their cause.

2.5.1 Neil Thompson – Promoting Equality and Emancipatory Practice

Thompson's model for explaining how discrimination and oppression work is called the PCS analysis. It offers a way of understanding how personal, cultural and structural discrimination interact with each other. In figure 1 you can see Thompson's model in which the personal is embedded within the cultural, and the cultural is embedded within the structural representations of discrimination and oppression.

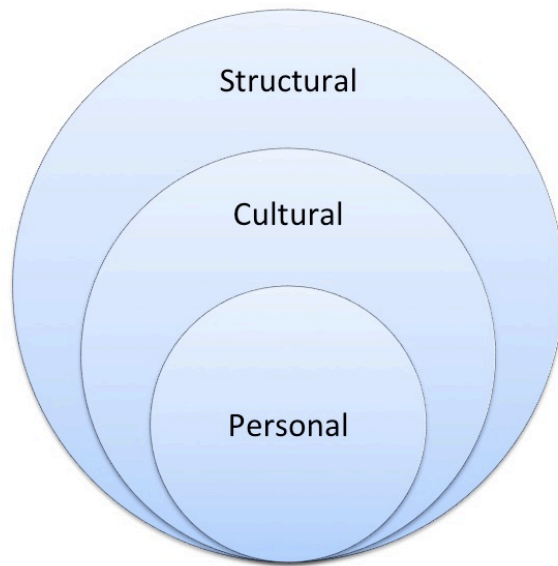


Figure 1: Neil Thompson's PCS analysis (2011)

This model provides an easily accessible visual representation of the ways different aspects of power and privilege play out in society. Up until this point I have mostly discussed personal and cultural aspects of discrimination in the sections on privilege (2.3), audism (2.4.1) and hearing privilege (2.4.2). However there has been some discussion of institutionalised audism as well, which fits into the structural level. The structural level comprises social, economic and political factors that maintain discrimination. At the beginning of this chapter (2.2.1) I used the work of Foucault to lay out the concept of discourse as closely linked to power. Thompson focuses on Foucault's conception of discourse when he is addressing social workers as it provides a way into recognising oppressive or discriminatory thinking and practices. Thompson is especially interested in language choices within a discourse. He describes different language choices that can sustain discriminatory attitudes and convey oppressive meanings: the alienating ways in which professional jargon can be used to exclude service users; a reliance on stereotypes; forms of language which carry stigma (an example of which might be 'deaf and dumb'); exclusive language that marginalizes others (e.g. 'chairman'); depersonalizing language like 'the deaf' (Thompson 2011, pp. 79-80). Thompson is wholly aware that the choice of language being used to conduct a meeting is also an exercise of power and mentions the use of interpreters to ensure that minority language speakers are not oppressed. Thompson also talks about the impact that the metaphors we use have on our understanding of the world,

Metaphor is therefore one of the many subtle devices which language draws upon in its role as a system for communicating not only specific messages but also generalised frameworks of meaning – that is culture. (Thompson 1998, p.15)

Analysing the ways in which we talk about minority groups, for example, can reveal frameworks of thinking that may be discriminatory or limiting of those groups. Analysing language is one way of finding out how we unconsciously think about others, understand concepts like power and agency or conceptualise our professional responsibilities. I posed a research question earlier in this chapter, in section 2.2.1, about the techniques of power that SLIs use in their work. One way to access this type of information, which is likely to be unconscious to some extent, is to analyse the language that SLIs use when they describe their work. Exploring underlying assumptions and ideologies in their discourse is one tool for accessing frameworks of power. Analysing the metaphors used to discuss power dynamics may reveal conceptual systems (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) which impact on their thinking. I discuss this further in chapter 4 where I describe the methods of my research.

Thompson's work goes on to describe ways in which social workers should consider their need to be self-empowered in their work in order to be able to facilitate the empowerment of others (Thompson 2007, p.34). Self-empowerment requires learning to be more aware of power dynamics and inequalities and becoming more self-reflexive. Thompson also promotes an 'emancipatory practice' paradigm with social workers (ibid 2011, p.51). For professionals who work with people, like social workers (and indeed SLIs), Thompson distinguishes between a practice that sustains inequalities and maintains oppressive ideologies and practices that "challenge, undermine or attenuate such oppressive forces" (ibid 2011, p.51). Thompson sees emancipatory practice as incorporating emancipatory politics (by which he means confronting inequality and social injustice especially in work with disadvantaged groups) and life politics (by which he means empowering others to have as much control as possible over their lives). He writes:

This has the potential benefits of not only improving the quality of life of the persons concerned but also contributing more broadly to the process of challenging oppressions (Thompson 2007) through the raising of emancipatory awareness, the assertion of rights, identification of injustices and deprivations and so on. (ibid 2011, p.53)

For Thompson, emancipatory practice is characterised by liberating people from oppression and discrimination. He encourages engaging with clients to learn from each other and engaging in reflexivity. Paulo Freire, a scholar of educational theory, is also especially interested in the concept of critical reflection and engagement with minority groups. In this next section I want to focus on the seminal work of Freire (1970) because it focuses specifically on transforming the relationship between oppressed and oppressor peoples through critical reflection. Freire also offers a different discourse for thinking about relationships of power and gives an alternative framing, and hopefully a practical one, for us to consider alongside Thompson's.

2.5.2 Freire – A Critical Pedagogy for Oppressed People and Oppressors

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's (1970) pedagogical theory is situated within a social justice framework. Freire is concerned with the unjust situation of working class people in Brazil and the cycle of domination and subservience that is sustained. He understands the social reality of these people to be one produced by human actions which must therefore be transformed by human actions (Freire 1970). He argues that oppressed peoples, alongside those who "show true solidarity, must acquire a critical awareness of oppression through the praxis of this struggle [for liberation]" (Freire 1970, p.33). Critical awareness is at the heart of his pedagogy. He promotes educating those undergoing oppressive practices to become critically aware. He also promotes facilitating a critical awareness amongst those in the oppressing group. This approach encourages open dialogue between the groups and relies upon Freire's tool for liberation: praxis. He explains that liberation can be achieved "only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1970, p.33). He sees critical pedagogues as the vehicle for this work; teachers who facilitate the critiquing of current power dynamics and class struggle so that those who are oppressed can begin to think differently and become empowered.

From this theory Freire offers a perspective on the dominating relationship between oppressors and oppressed people. This perspective is valuable for my study because it discusses the behaviours of oppressors and this is useful for reflecting on the often unconscious habitual practices which impinge on the freedom of others. As previously discussed in section 2.2.3, the habitus produces behaviours, potentially oppressive ones, but as we know from Bourdieu's work, the habitus is unconscious. Freire's description of "oppressor consciousness" (1970, p.40) offers a framework for

observing the behaviours of hearing people who have, historically and collectively, oppressed deaf signers. Crucially, this description of behaviours allows me to scrutinise the manifestation of hearing privilege. I intend to present Freire's depiction of oppressors from his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) in order to explore the mapping of this type of oppressive consciousness onto SLIs and their relationship with deaf signers. It should be noted that Baker-Shenk (1986) initiated this mapping process in an article entitled *Characteristics of Oppressed and Oppressor Peoples: Their Effect on the Interpreting Context* (see section 3.8 in the following chapter for further details).

2.5.3 Oppressor Traits

The oppressor consciousness is described by Freire as manifesting different behaviours which I refer to as traits. According to Freire, oppressed people are perceived as objects to be dominated by oppressors. In a materialist society, oppressors maintain that everyone has a right to own more commodities, and therefore those who do not have as much as them are considered lazy or incompetent (Freire 1970). When charity is extended to oppressed peoples, the oppressors want to be thanked for their generosity despite the fact that they created the situation of want or need. Oppressors can display a saviour-complex, according to Freire, which can promote further dependence of the oppressed group, maintaining the *status quo*. Oppressors require the maintenance of the *status quo* for their own comfort and success, therefore this situation suits them and they educate oppressed people to be docile, accepting their circumstances without question. They discourage criticality in the oppressed. The oppressor consciousness is paternalistic and pejorative towards oppressed peoples, blaming them for their situation and at the same time offering acts of charity to keep them in a position of subservience and gratitude. Oppressors often ascribe the situation of the oppressed to their "intrinsic inferiority" (1970, p.137), dehumanising them whilst simultaneously offering a superficial rationale for the *status quo* that does not invite further critical reflection. When the oppressed group want liberation, Freire describes how oppressors feel threatened and respond defensively, "[t]he only way out (which functions as a defense mechanism) is to project onto the coordinator their own usual practices: steering, conquering, and invading" (Freire 1970, p.138). This links to hearing fragility (discussed in section 2.4.2). I refer to all of these behaviours as 'oppressor traits' later in chapter 6.

There are oppressors who recognise their role in dominating others and want to change the social order but they can also fall into traps that come with being "heirs of exploitation" (ibid 1970, p.42). Their embedded prejudices manifest as a lack of belief

that the oppressed group have the capacity to think for themselves and therefore they hold a conviction that they, the oppressors, must be the ones to enact the transformation. Freire tells his readers, “[a] real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him [sic] in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favour without that trust” (ibid 1970, p.42). He also warns that for those working on the side of the oppressed it is important not to take advantage of the dependence of the oppressed to create even greater dependence.

2.5.4 Partnering Traits

There are oppressors who have ‘converted’ to desiring the liberation of oppressed people and who show ‘comradeship’ (ibid 1970, p.43). These members of the oppressing class show traits that manifest their commitment to liberation. These traits include the humanising of oppressed people and a desire to transform the unjust order. There is an expression of solidarity with oppressed people and the implementation of praxis so that they carry out self-examination regularly. These individuals understand the duality of oppressed people who have internalized oppressor traits whilst at the same time embodying subservience. Converted oppressors understand that they are not free or fully human whilst the relationship of domination is maintained. Therefore, the fight for liberation is not simply about the oppressed people, but also for themselves. They recognise that reversing oppression does not make anyone more fully human. They pursue a transformation from the dependence of oppressed people into independence. The tool, according to Freire, for this work is primarily dialogue and “co-intentional education” (ibid 1970, p.51), with the aim of engaging oppressed people in critical thinking. As Freire writes:

This task implies that revolutionary leaders do not go to the people in order to bring them a message of ‘salvation,’ but in order to come to know through dialogue with them both their objective situation and their awareness of that situation... (Freire 1970, p.75)

They invite a horizontal relationship with oppressed people, instead of a hierarchical one and foster mutual trust by being transparent and accountable.

All of these traits I have termed ‘partnering traits’. SLIs encounter deaf signers who can be understood as oppressed in the terms of this analysis of Freire’s. SLIs regularly hear stories of oppression and discrimination from deaf signers and they may

be able to relate to the position of the ‘converted’ oppressor who wants to partner with the deaf signer to fight against discriminatory actions.

2.5.5 Criticisms of Freire’s Concepts

Freire’s work has had a significant impact in educational theory, feminist and race studies, community development studies, literary theory, philosophy, political science and beyond (Kincheloe 2008). It does not go without critique and has been challenged on its patriarchal perspective by feminist theorist and cultural critic bell hooks (1994, 2003) and community development theorist Margaret Ledwith (1997), but neither of these scholars discounts its potential for radical and practical outcomes. Following hooks, Ledwith calls for a re-reading of his approach to include the intersection of other oppressions,

Power is located within a multidimensional system of oppressions in which we are all simultaneously oppressors and oppressed. It is essential that we see this as a complex whole that interlinks and reinforces at every level. (Ledwith 1997, p.136)

I contend that audism should be one of these oppressions that need to be added into the ‘complex whole’. Ledwith (1997) describes the application of Freire’s pedagogy to community development work by emphasizing the need to listen to the everyday stories of people and the offer of a critical framework for those stories that allows for transformation. She envisages this approach as emancipatory because it gives “voice to silenced voices” (ibid 1997, p.63). Though SLIs are not community developers by profession they regularly hear stories of oppression from deaf signing clients and are embroiled in situations where there is the potential for discrimination and oppressive traits to be displayed by hearing clients. Exploring the actions of SLIs in these situations is of interest in my research.

Two aspects of hooks’ work in particular are pertinent in my study because they focus on aspects of the habitus and on language use. hooks (2003) encourages a vigilance around both the work required to “undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination” (2003, p.36), in other words an examination of the habitus, and “about the ways we use language” (2003, p.37), because of the tendency for dichotomous thinking (i.e. them/us, either/or) which sustains oppressive structures. hooks reinforces Freire’s sentiments in the following statement,

Dominant groups often maintain their power by keeping information from subordinate groups. That dominance is altered when knowledge is shared in a way that reinforces mutual partnership. (hooks 2003, p.74)

The engagement that is needed to transform the current oppressive situation needs to be instigated by both oppressors and oppressed peoples. The difficulty for people who are in the position of oppressors have is that a large amount of privilege exists that is difficult to renounce because it will cause discomfort for them. Transformation requires those who are benefitting from the current state of dominance to renounce their advantages in order to partner effectively.

Other criticisms of Freire's work concentrate on Freire's questionable claim to ideological neutrality and the assumption that there are powerless people who, with the assistance of an educator, can be liberated in their thinking and that this is universally acceptable or 'good' (Blackburn 2000). His views of power, claims Blackburn (2000), oversimplify people into two categories: the oppressed and the oppressors. This administering of a certain perception of power onto people who may have a different perception of power, and who may feel powerful in their own terms, is in itself problematic and not necessarily empowering. Ladd's work (2003) on subaltern deaf people shows that they have employed a strategy called '1001 victories' in which deaf signers subvert the *status quo* in ingenious ways maintaining their deaf pride and culture around hearing people. Examples that Ladd gives of these victories are: deaf school children covertly using sign language despite a ban on it; the damaging of audiological equipment; and behaviour bordering on insolence with teachers (Ladd 2003, pp. 306-315). Therefore, I cannot ignore Blackburn's warning:

...any pre-determined vision of liberation introduced from the outside is ultimately paternalistic, since it presupposes that the oppressed are incapable of determining their own endogenously produced vision of liberation. (Blackburn 2000, p.12)

The potential for Freire's ideas to be misused is evidenced in Blackburn's research, but he does not reject Freire's entire philosophy outright as a consequence. Instead he recommends using the "intellectual brilliance and revolutionary potential" (Blackburn 2000, p.13) of his work to reveal new pathways for oppressors and oppressed peoples to

take. He recognises the dynamic and dialogical nature of the work of critical educators that encourages continued, never-ending conversations that lead to newer insights.

I am choosing to use Freire's work, prompted by Baker-Shenk (1986), in a particular way. By describing the oppressor traits and partnering traits I am proposing to use his social theory to identify these traits in others. Kincheloe, a critical pedagogy scholar, warns "[a] social theory should not determine how we see the world but should help us devise questions and strategies for exploring it", he goes on to say that critical theory:

is never static as it is always evolving, changing in light of both new theoretical insights and new problems, social circumstances, and educational contexts, a reality that resonates with Paulo's [Freire's] request to reinvent him and his work in new social conditions. (Kincheloe 2008, p.169).

I hope to employ aspects of Freire's theory to explore the underlying ideologies or beliefs of SLIs as they practice, scrutinizing the manifestations of oppressor traits and partnering traits. By avoiding a binary distinction – oppressor or oppressed – and instead looking for what I have termed 'partnering traits' (section 2.5.4), I hope to be able to produce a nuanced exploration into attitudes of SLIs, who by virtue of their contact with the British deaf signing community are more aware of the oppressive behaviours of the majority culture.

These two approaches, by Thompson and Freire, to practising professions in emancipatory ways, offer insight into how to explore the ways in which interpreters work in relation to discrimination and oppression. When faced with power dynamics in their jobs, how do SLIs reflect on them and make decisions about how they will manage them? Do they see the potential oppressor traits of hearing clients, or even the oppressor traits that they themselves harbour?

2.6 Conclusion

It has been established that power and privilege are integrated into society through belief systems and values that become institutionalised. Simultaneously those underlying beliefs and systems become inculcated, through upbringing and institutionalised education, in the individual habitus. Every citizen in a society can then act according to social norms and play their part (to varying degrees of success). However, when these dispositions of the habitus encompass deeply ingrained beliefs about the status and value

of deaf signers and consequently shape their language choices, they impact on the actions of those people (deaf and hearing alike). Hearing privilege, in the form of aversive audism, impacts the lives of deaf people daily, and has the potential to create internal conflict as a result of mental colonisation and internalised audism. It is my proposal that SLIs manage this legacy of living in a majority hearing society and potentially struggle with the internal conflicts it triggers. As they witness daily microaggressions towards deaf signing clients and learn about the history of oppression of deaf signers they are exposed to counter discourses that challenge their habituses. SLIs are members of the hearing majority carrying knapsacks of hearing privilege. Yet they may also be converted oppressors who show solidarity with the signing deaf community. These conflicting identities may give rise to feelings of discomfort, hearing fragility and paradoxical power dynamics. For SLIs who want to be professionals who empower others, who promote equality and disrupt or transform the *status quo*, how can they enact an emancipatory practice?

In the next chapter I will focus on a body of literature within interpreting studies that situates the profession of interpreting more broadly and sign language interpreting in particular. I will then explore literature related to agency and power within interpreting studies with a view to situating my research within the field.

Chapter 3: Interpreting studies and power dynamics

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I situated my study within frameworks of power and privilege and explored the contributions of disability studies and deaf studies to further define the situation of hearing interpreters working with deaf signers. I then considered models for working alongside people who regularly experience oppressive and discriminatory practices. I intend, in this chapter, to situate my research within the field of interpreting studies and to explore that literature in relation to power, agency and alignment.

3.2 Mapping the Role of the Interpreter in Interpreting Studies

Translation studies, the parent discipline for interpreting studies, has traditionally taken an interest in the practicalities and process of translation work (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002). Only latterly has it become more interested in issues related to power and ideology. Mason (1994) questions where the loyalties of translators lie in an article focused on discourse and ideology. He analyses a text to identify the vehicles of ideology within it and reveals how the translator changes the ideological discourse in the translated text. Mason comments that on showing these ideological differences to linguists, they displayed outrage and considered the translator to have deliberately skewed the translation (Mason 1994, p.33). Mason is not convinced that this is the case because he senses that the projection of ideology through the process is largely unconscious. He encourages future analysis of texts like these to not simply compare isolated textual differences, but to uncover ideological influences of the translator. Interestingly, Mason does not explore the translator's motivations or thought processes and therefore cannot know whether he or she intentionally fed their own beliefs or values into the translation. This text-bound study is revealing; however, it seems equally important for researchers to discover what interpreters and translators are consciously aware of doing to translated texts or interpretations and, perhaps more importantly, what they are unaware of doing.

As a sub-category of translation studies, interpreting studies arose in the 1990s (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger, 2002). It began from the perspective that interpreters were taking a source text (spoken) and creating a target text (spoken) in their work (Wadensjö 1998; Roy 1993). Focusing initially on linguistic and psychological approaches to

interpreting there was little interest in the social aspect of interpreting *in situ*, the interactions of the participants and the power relations at play. Interpreting studies research has since produced a wealth of data that confirms that interpreters are social agents. They are no longer conceived of as invisible cogs in a translating machine (a popular stereotype) but as collaborators in an interaction (Wadensjö 1998; Roy 1993; Metzger 1999; Angelelli 2004a) and co-constructors of meaning in the interaction (Turner 2005). This ‘sociological turn’ (Angelelli 2014) in interpreting studies began to recognise the agency of the interpreter, including integrating the work of Bourdieu (for examples see Wolf 2014; Inghilleri 2005; and Angelelli 2004a). In a similar manner, Mason and Ren (2014) draw on Foucault’s approach to power to analyse interpreted interactions. This section of the literature review will consider these aspects of interpreting studies to contextualise my research.

3.2.1 The Nonpartisan Interpreter

Anderson (1976) gave one of the first sociological accounts of the interpreter’s role and made the link between interpreting and power. His interest stemmed from the impact an interpreter might have on ethnographic research. His interest in the positioning of the interpreter ‘in the middle’ of the clients prompts him to note that the interpreter’s “behaviour may, therefore, be expected to have an unusually great impact on the structure of the entire situation” (Anderson 1976, p.212). He goes on to argue that a ‘nonpartisan’ interpreter may approach the work in very different ways depending on how they view ‘nonpartisan’. He states,

Thus, the nonpartisan interpreter can either function as a fair, but covert manipulator, utilizing the power inherent in his monopoly of the means of communication, or he can remain a passive element in the interaction network. Factors leading translators to adopt one rather than the other of these orientations merit investigation. (Anderson 1976, p.213)

This prompt to research a dichotomous positioning was, in its time, revolutionary because it recognised the agency of the interpreter and the need to investigate the profession from a sociological point of view. It is interesting, however, that the powerful interpreter that Anderson describes has the capacity to be simultaneously nonpartisan and covertly manipulating. Equally curious is the description of the interpreter as a ‘passive element’ rendering them a tool. Anderson’s call to investigate further these sociological

aspects of the interpreter's role was not responded to immediately, however interpreting studies did pay heed eventually.

3.2.2 The Interactional Model of Interpreting

Twenty years after Anderson's prompts, Wadensjö (1998) embarked on research to explore triadic encounters to better understand the mediated interactions that take place. To counteract the view of an isolated, monologic event (which came out of work in conference interpreting) her focus became the social event and its dialogic character within community interpreting settings. Wadensjö is interested in the interdependence of participants in the interpreter-mediated interaction. Her work touches on the differing world-views of the participants which, despite the interpreter providing a linguistic bridge, still creates barriers to communication (Wadensjö 1998, p.278). This highlights the problematic assumption that an interpreter will act like a machine, when in reality they impact the interpretation with their presence and their world-view.

Complementary sociolinguistic research by Roy (1993) on an interpreted interaction between a faculty member and a deaf student carefully analyses turn-taking and in particular the interpreter's coordination of the interaction. Roy's research establishes that interpreters (and in this research signed language interpreters) are "actively involved in interpreting conventions for language use in creating turn exchanges through their knowledge of discourse systems and social practices, and the way these systems put that knowledge together to create meaning" (Roy 2000, p.124). She concludes that the success of an interpreted event does not necessarily lie solely with the interpreter but with all the participants. Her arguments support the idea that the interpreter cannot simply be a conduit of information because of the need to coordinate the turns and manage the interaction.

3.2.3 The Non-Neutral Interpreter

Supporting evidence for this collaborative approach to the interpreter's role comes from Metzger (1999) who tackles the assumption of the 'neutrality' of the interpreter. In her analysis of the data, collected in a mock medical interview (with a student interpreter, a deaf client and a doctor) and a real medical interview (with a qualified interpreter, a deaf client and a doctor), Metzger finds evidence of interpreter-generated nonrenditions (content that is not in the original source text), and divides them into two categories. These categorizations are relayings and interactional management (Metzger 1999, p.157). Metzger tells us that three-quarters of the interpreter's nonrenditions are made to the deaf

participant and inaccessible to the hearing participant (ibid 1999, p.99). Her point is that interpreters are not simply rendering what is being said or signed, they are coordinating the talk, adding information and potentially showing some bias towards a particular participant. Neutrality has traditionally been defined as the provision of equivalence in the two languages, so these non-equivalencies have the potential to pose a problem for interpreters whose professional code of conduct requires neutrality. Metzger introduces the concept of the 'interpreter's paradox', in which the professional code is at odds with the reality of interactional discourse (Metzger 1999, p.199). In her study she asks the question:

Should interpreters, recognising that they cannot help but function as a participant within an interpreted encounter, no longer strive to be a neutral, uninvolved participant or should they recognise the paradox of neutrality and strive to minimise their influence on interactive discourse? (Metzger 1999, p.155)

This question assumes the continued desire of all stakeholders for neutrality and the possibility for interpreters to minimise their influence. However, perhaps an alternative question to ask would be; should they recognise the paradox of neutrality, accept the impossibility of the task, and instead focus on being transparent about their role and their identity and work towards collaboration with the other participants? This collaboration seems to be crucial because the other participants in an interpreted event also have influence due to their agency. Mason (2009) recognises the concept of the interpreter having "the power to sustain or interrupt the normal turn-taking sequence" (Mason 2009, p.61) but only if the other participants in the interaction accept their interventions. It appears therefore that an interpreter can work to disrupt the *status quo* at times, but it may be rejected. Therefore, the collaboration needs to be actively engaged in and made explicit, which challenges the notion of neutrality and also of the invisibility of interpreters.

3.3 The Sociological Turn in Interpreting Studies

The sociological turn in interpreting studies has already been discussed to some degree, however the focus of this part of the literature review turns more to matters of social agency and social factors impacting on the interpreted encounter.

3.3.1 Visibility of Interpreters

Angelelli (2004) explores the agency and visibility of interpreters. Her research focuses on spoken language medical interpreters working in a hospital setting. She posits that interpreters are social beings whose work exists in a social context and therefore the interpreter's participation "is on the one hand triggered by the interplay of social factors and, on the other hand, constrained by the norms of the institution and society in which the interaction occurs" (Angelelli 2004, p.76). She is especially interested in the question of whether gender, age and socio-economic status impact on the interpreter and also whether the interpreter's own identity and alignment with the speaker affects his/her perception of their role in a given interpreting moment (ibid 2009, p.3). Angelelli carries out a literature survey of sociological and psychological theory which leads her to the conclusion that interpreters cannot be neutral and indifferent but are affected by instances of "power, discrimination, conference or deference of status" (ibid 2004, p.32). In her review of the history of interpreting Angelelli reveals how issues of power and culture, dominance and subordination have been an integral part of the profession (ibid 2009, p.26). She attributes the enduring misconception that interpreters remain neutral and are considered invisible to the professional organisations of interpreters who enshrine this invisibility in their codes of practice. She writes:

The present view of interpreting shared by schools and professional organizations fails to problematize and explore the divorce between the prescription and the reality of the ICE [interpreted communicative event]. By prescribing that the role of the interpreter should be *invisible*, the profession fails to see the interpreter's role for what it really is – that of an individual who orchestrates language, culture, and social factors in a communicative event. (ibid 2009, p.24)

In order to confront the divide between prescription and the reality Angelelli calls for a more interdisciplinary, integrated approach towards the study of interpreting. This approach would incorporate knowledge from sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology and sociology in order to build a better, more holistic picture of what is happening in an interpreted event. She sees the interpreter as a powerful agent:

...[t]his theory would also consider the interpreter as a powerful, visible individual who has agency in the interaction. As such, the interpreter would be capable of

exercising power and/or solidarity. The interpreter would be considered as someone who is capable of either maintaining or altering the *status quo*. (ibid 2009, p.89)

Her work includes an analysis of Bourdieu, situating the interpreting event as a site for the interplay of habitus, capital and field between all the participants. She is concerned with emphasizing the agency of the interpreter, something that Bourdieu's work allows her to do. Angelelli concludes that in using this lens of social theory there is an "intrinsic interconnection" between the interpreter, the institution that they are working in and the society within which the institution is situated (Angelelli 2004b, p.41), all of which place limitations and restraints on the interpreter as they navigate interactions with other social agents in an interpreted encounter.

Angelelli describes a 'visibility continuum' on which interpreters can be placed according to how much text ownership they take. Text ownership can make the interpreter highly visible or alternatively it may only give minor visibility to the interpreter (Angelelli 2004, p.77). Social factors that motivate text ownership include the patient's ethnicity and culture, their level of education and their socio-economic status among others. The strategies for text ownership include replacing the monolingual interlocutor, alignment/affect, brokering cultural references, expressing solidarity/exercising power, expanding/summarising, exploring answers, sliding up and down the register scale and controlling the flow of traffic (Angelelli 2004, p.78). She provides many examples of interpreted events where interpreters are highly visible and create nonrenditions, to use Metzger's terminology, in order to ensure the patient's comprehension or to manage the interaction. In these situations, the interpreters display very powerful positions. The lenses that Angelelli uses to view her data make it clear that interpreters are not immune to making judgments about the participants in the interactions, nor are they immune to their own habitus, to institutional expectations or to cultural affinities. This reinforces the idea that concepts of power and privilege discussed in chapter two are highly relevant to the work of SLIs and need further research.

Of interest to my study are the interviews with interpreters that Angelelli undertook. There are several references to the use of power, or lack of power, in these. In one specific extract that Angelelli shares, an interpreter called Joaquín discusses how he responds to power imbalances,

If it is a rude doctor that does not want to listen to the patient, then you have to take the side of the patient to be sure that the patient gets heard, that the patient asks the

questions that she has to ask, and that the patient understands. (Angelelli 2004a, p.115)

This type of intervention by an interpreter is interesting with respect to my study. How do interpreters choose to talk about the power dynamics that they witness in their work? If they describe allying with a client, what do they say is their motivation and how do they describe that client's positioning? Angelelli (2004a) confirms that "not all speakers enjoy the same status when it comes to getting and keeping the floor" (Angelelli 2004a, p.139), suggesting that some speakers are socially disadvantaged. In a situation where an SLI notices a socially disadvantaged client, my question is; what do they do about it?

Translation scholar Baker turns her attention to the reality "that translators and interpreters are not apolitical, that many hold strong beliefs about the rights and wrongs of (political) events in which they find themselves involved professionally, as translators and interpreters" (2013, pg. 23). Baker documents the work of activist translation and interpreting groups like Babels and Tlaxcala among others. These volunteer-led groups position themselves as having political objectives and disrupt professional norms by being deliberately partisan (Baker 2013). Boéri (2008) identifies a scholarly shortcoming in research into the impact of interpreters and translators on social change at a structural level. When writing specifically about Babels, she says "we need to acknowledge that the social role of the interpreter cannot be fulfilled by volunteers alone but must be placed at the heart of a renewed professional ethics of translation and interpreting, an ethics that is not restricted to working conditions but is more, or at least equally, concerned with the social impact of the profession" (2008, pg. 47). I agree with Boéri's sentiment and wish to explore this area of the social role of the interpreter. While I think it is valuable to investigate how the interpreting profession can impact on structural inequalities, I am particularly interested in how power and agency is used by individual interpreters to transform social situations.

3.3.2 Power and Agency

In a review of interpreting studies literature about the power and agency of interpreters, Mason and Ren (2012) use a Foucauldian definition of power which emphasises the network of relations being exercised by people. They posit different types of power at play in the work of interpreting: institutional and interactional. Institutional power, they tell us, constrains the work of interpreters particularly in a court setting, for example, where interventions by interpreters are rarely tolerated. They explain that

institutional power intersects with interactional power but that their focus will be on interactional power only. They position interpreters as powerful agents in a triadic encounter at the outset of their article and follow this up with evidence of visible manifestations of power (namely using positioning and the direction of eye gaze). Mason and Ren's article divides these manifestations of interactional power under three headings; as *co-interlocutors*, as *empowerment figures* or as *taking a non-neutral stance*. In the following quote Mason and Ren list actions which position the interpreter as a *co-interlocutor*:

interpreters may voluntarily introduce themselves, propose a meeting format, explain cultural differences, answer a question, make a suggestion, or conduct small talk with one or both parties. As gatekeepers, they may sometimes even withhold certain information that they deem inappropriate (vulgar remarks, cultural taboos, etc.) or irrelevant, even if they are trained not to do so. (Mason and Ren 2012, p.243)

These types of social interactions with clients are often necessary for the interpreting assignment to go smoothly and they make a connection with Angelelli's (2004b) research on healthcare interpreters who create their own nonrenditions to interpreted interactions as evidence for this type of agency. As agents of empowerment, Mason and Ren tell us, interpreters may use various strategies to facilitate a client whom they consider to be at a disadvantage to have "better access to information, to take a turn to speak, to decide on their own to do or not do something" (Mason and Ren 2012, p.243). They specifically mention SLIs who ally with the deaf signing client. Interpreters often possess information in community interpreting situations that the minority group or institutionally disempowered client does not have access to and they can impart this information or remind clients of their rights in order to empower them. Finally, Mason and Ren discuss the action of departing "from a strictly neutral stance" (ibid 2012, p.244), even though they posit that neutrality is a fundamental part of interpreting ethics. Mason and Ren (2012) describe the ways in which interpreters can avoid partiality and suggest that they are:

to remain detached throughout the process, to convey no attitude of their own to both parties, to adopt a strict or formal style in their behaviour (cf. Wadensjö 1998, p.240), not to engage in unnecessary discussions with, or offer suggestions to,

either party, or give opinions or judgments on anything, even if asked for. (Mason and Ren 2012, p.244)

Therefore, doing the opposite of the actions in the list in the above quote is considered taking a non-neutral stance. *Departing from a neutral stance* occurs when, “[t]heir own cultural identity and affiliation to communities of practice may affect their understanding and interpretation of the situation and may influence their decision making. This kind of understanding, interpretation, and decision making is not totally devoid of subjective judgment, attitude and personal feelings” (ibid 2012, p.244). Mason and Ren use existing data (from a television programme for example) to analyse the actions of interpreters. This data collection starts with the non-renditions that interpreters make, and they then infer their motivations. What is missing from this account is the interpreters’ stories of what they were attempting to do. By starting with the motivations of the interpreters and their account of their actions it would be possible to research their awareness of agency and interactional power and this is where my interest lies.

Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2014) prompt further discussion about the interpreter’s agency with their concept of role-space, they refer specifically to signed language interpreting. They agree with Metzger (1999) that impartiality and neutrality are unattainable and instead recommend the objective of equality of alignment. They put forward a model for “minimising the interpreter’s impact (or footprint)” (Llewellyn-Jones and Lee 2014, p.14) by suggesting that interpreters consciously participate rather than pretend otherwise. They suggest that no other profession requires impartiality from its members and promote the concept of interpreters aiming to assist their clients to achieve their conversational goals. They rely on other interpreting research to support what they regard as the three axes of role-space: presentation of self, alignment and interaction management. Each of these axes offers a spectrum of behaviours which are context-dependent. The flexibility of their model encourages a dynamic approach to interpreting, recognising that SLIs are, most importantly, not conduits of communicative messages. They say:

in any given interaction, it is not the interpreter who decides on the nature and dimensions of the role-space; instead, it is the characteristics of the interaction that determine the appropriateness of the myriad approaches and roles available to the interpreter. (Llewellyn-Jones and Lee 2013, p.69).

The model highlights interpreting studies research and draws it together using a somewhat arbitrary but visual model (a graph-like depiction of the 3 axes), making it accessible to practitioners and perhaps making them aware of the latitude that they have in their profession. It helps by offering a way to clearly describe an interpreted interaction using the three dimensions. What it does not do is offer interpreters a way of rationalising their own decision-making process in different role-spaces. Additionally, there is no discussion in this model of power dynamics even within the dimension of alignment. Their proposition that interpreters remain bi-partial is focussed on treating each interlocutor equally, however discussions about management of power dynamics are minimal.

Alternatively, Merlini and Favaron focus on “the ‘management of power’, in other words the interpreter’s ‘power to control the power’ wielded by his/her two clients” (2003, p.214) in a study of actual observations of interpreters working in varied community settings. They find that interpreters regularly work towards a ‘reconciliatory’ goal by which they mean “the ‘conciliator’ could be described as the one who brings people together, or more precisely, the one who enables people to talk to each other by providing a common communicative environment” (2003, p.212). The power of the interpreter, they conclude, is in creating this common communicative environment using various agentic means, which include word choices, divergent renditions and alignment.

Russell and Shaw (2016) make a unique contribution to research on power and interpreting in their article *Power and Privilege: An exploration of decision-making of interpreters*. They set about to analyse how SLIs (both deaf and hearing) discuss power and power dynamics. They recognise that an SLI may have an identity and sense of allegiance to the deaf community which may, in some instances, cause conflict if they perceive power imbalances. Seeing a power imbalance, the SLI “may consciously or unconsciously choose to alter an interaction via their linguistic, cultural, and/or ethical choices” (Russell and Shaw 2016, p.3). The interpreters that they spoke to in focus groups give examples of agentic behaviours in which they use their knowledge of power, and power processes (in legal settings), to take actions that might, for example, ensure that a deaf client has full access to legal proceedings (ibid 2016, p.12). Russell and Shaw focus on agency in their study and define it as:

the subjective awareness that one is initiating, executing, and controlling one’s own actions in the world. It reflects a sense of the interpreter being able to exhibit

ownership and accountability as it pertains to their individual decisions and actions in the interpreted interaction. (ibid 2016, p.15)

They code their focus group data for instances in which SLIs have a sense of agency and for the opposite. Agency is linked with being aware of choices of actions they can take, being initiators of action, being willing to change practices and creating positive relationships with both hearing and deaf clients. They conclude that SLIs do have an understanding of constructs of power and their impact, they also indicate that good decision-making and ethical choices are made when the SLI conceives the interpreting role as agentic. They make recommendations regarding the training of interpreters, particularly in legal settings, on power dynamics and a conceptualisation of the role of interpreting that includes agency and ethical decision-making. Despite this study being focussed on legal settings, it seems reasonable that these findings are applicable to all interpreting settings because of the position of deaf people as a marginalised minority who frequently experience disempowering situations. Russell and Shaw do not discuss, in the limitations section of their article, what the impact of discussing these ideas in a focus group may have had on the participants. Discussing issues of power in a virtual focus group could potentially restrain some SLIs from being candid and transparent, and the presence of the researcher in the online interaction might also impact on their responses. It would be valuable to collect the views of SLIs with as little external or social pressure as possible in order to gain more candid reactions, which is something I try to do in my study (see section 4.4.4 in the methods and methodology chapter).

3.3.3 The Interpreter's Habitus

The notion of habitus and other aspects of Bourdieu's social theory become the focus of research by Inghilleri (2005) on interpreting. She takes Bourdieu's concept of "still ill-defined occupations" (Bourdieu 2000, p.157), which sit in "zones of uncertainty" and applies it to interpreting, particularly in the realm of the political asylum application process. For Inghilleri, "Bourdieu views zones of uncertainty as contradictory and potentially liberatory spaces within a social structure in which contradictions emerge from a convergence of conflicting world views that momentarily upset the relevant habitus" (Inghilleri, 2005, p.72). By applying Bernstein's work on pedagogic discourse, she positions the interpreter as a catalyst for the reconceptualisation of social practice (ibid, 2005). In her example the interpreter disrupts the field of asylum applications because of the uncertainty of the interpreting profession's standing. This in turn calls for

a moment of reflection as each participant has an opportunity to consider the habitus they bring to the interaction which may conflict with others and reposition themselves in this newly disrupted process. In terms of power, the asylum-seeking applicant in these meetings has the least power and may well be disadvantaged because of cultural world-views and ethnocentric practices. Inghilleri points out,

How an applicant is positioned in relation to the interpreting habitus is not derived from the interpreter alone, but from the interplay of field(s) and habitus within the interpreted event. (Inghilleri 2005, p.81)

In other words, the interpreter is not always entirely responsible for how the disempowered participant is perceived, understood or positioned by the other participants in the interaction, particularly where several fields are positioning themselves (courts, lawyers and civil servants), and especially where the identification of 'asylum seeker' is prioritised over cultural identity. However, there are times when the interpreter can affect the way that one participant is perceived because of their inter-cultural knowledge. Due to the opportunity that the zone of uncertainty offers, the interpreter can disrupt social norms and expectations. In an interpreting event where one deaf signer is present, and the rest of the participants are hearing, there will be a predominance of habitus that incorporate hearing (audist) majority culture and norms, which needs to be taken into account by the interpreter.

Disempowered clients and the task of empowerment by the interpreter is a topic of interest for Bahadir (2010). She focuses on war zone interpreting, refugee situations and asylum seeking, however her work has a direct link to signed language interpreting because of the nature of the work that arises where "[t]he dividing line between advocacy and interpreting is blurred" (Bahadir, 2010, p.124). She uses Spivak's term 'subaltern' to refer to the disempowered client and asks whether interpreting can in fact empower them, giving voice to the voiceless (see sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.3 for more detail about subalternity). Conversely, she also asks a very important question that I am interested in: do interpreters act as "impartial, benign practitioners or partisan oppressive enforcers of social conformity, deriving their role from wider inequalities of power (based on race, class, gender)?" (Bahadir, 2010, p.126). She recognises that interpreters speak in both the language of the oppressor and of the oppressed and is at pains to point out that they can never be neutral in the performance of their profession nor in the receiving of the

communications they are privy to. She concludes therefore that interpreters must position themselves, because they cannot do otherwise. She states,

Open and courageous positioning is vital because interpreters mostly suffer from burnout or ‘helper syndrome’ when they do not reflect critically and honestly on their involvement as ‘participant observers’ with human(e) qualities in these contexts. (Bahadir 2010, p.128)

Here Bahadir describes explicit positioning as a survival technique. The critical reflection by interpreters that she calls for mirrors Freire’s critical praxis (see section 2.5.2). Though Bahadir focuses on disrupting the myth of the body-less interpreter whose voice is the only tool, in sign language interpreting the body *is* the voice as well as the voice-box and therefore this myth of the body-less interpreter is already one which has been rejected by SLIs. However, Bahadir does point out that the bodily positioning of an interpreter, especially when that interpreter is working for a law enforcement agency, for example, is aligned with the dominating force. This is also true in most sign language/spoken language interpreted situations because the SLI is often positioned closer to the spoken language source in order to be seen by the deaf signer. This physical alignment may also represent a philosophical alignment for the deaf signer. Bahadir makes plain that interpreters must not only position themselves physically and philosophically but also grapple with their collusion within power structures:

The interpreters who feel uneasy vis-à-vis their absorption into intricate mechanisms of oppression and discrimination must either resign or act. Those who act take a stance, and take on the burden of their articulations. (Bahadir 2010, p.132)

This starkly expressed perspective seems necessary for professional interpreters who try to maintain an impartiality or neutrality that is impossible (often due to their codes of conduct and professional discourse, see the next section 3.4). Understanding your position as an interpreter, taking responsibility for your decisions and alignments all require critical self-reflection and a framework from which to understand your agency. This takes us back again to the work of Freire and Thompson (sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2) who urge practitioners in other fields to be self-reflexive.

This exploration of the sociological turn in interpreting studies has touched on the notion of professions in their infancy through Inghilleri’s (2005) ‘zones of uncertainty’.

It seems clear that professional codes of conduct have an impact on behaviours of interpreters and when it comes to their understanding of their visibility, their agency and their role. Consequently, it seems critical to understand how the sign language interpreting profession has struggled to develop whilst holding various issues in tension.

3.4 Sign Language Interpreters and the Consequences of Professionalisation

Historically, hearing mediators (the predecessors of SLIs) for the signing deaf community in Britain most often belonged to that community in some way; whether religious workers (missioners) or teachers they were often family members who grew up signing (Scott-Gibson 1990). As unofficial mediators, they benefitted from having an insider's knowledge of the signing deaf community, were more likely to hold its values and consequently did not pose a threat to the way of life of deaf signers (Scott-Gibson 1990). In the 1970s, social workers took on more responsibility for work with deaf people however, and the previous voluntary roles were usurped, consequently social workers for the deaf were often professional social workers who had learned BSL latterly and acted in a dual role as social workers and also as interpreters (Simpson 1990). Subsequently, professionalisation of SLIs had a further impact on this state of affairs, something I will discuss in detail.

3.4.1 From Helper to Conduit and Beyond

Since the development of the British Sign Language interpreting profession in the late 1970s and early 1980s, community interpreters have been trained in formal training programs, and have often not had the same understanding and shared values as the unofficial 'helpers' of earlier times. This 'emerging profession', as Scott-Gibson wrote in 1990, has brought benefits and pitfalls. It offered a professional service, not one reliant on a family member, with the potential biases, advocacy or advice-giving that that might bring (Roy 1993). Instead, a role that was more 'machine-like' was promoted, often referred to as the conduit model, and this served to establish a profession separate from the 'helping' approach. Tate and Turner (2002) confirm that the dominant model of interpreting during the 1980s was the conduit or 'machine' model. They note that the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People's (CACDP)⁶ Code of conduct, promoted this type of model by both prescribing and reflecting it (Tate and Turner 2002, p.54). Tate and Turner's perception is that this model promoted the

⁶ CACDP has since split into two organisations: the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD); and the qualifications awarding body Signature.

autonomy and agency of the deaf signer because machines follow instructions and do not proactively intervene. Despite the clear-cut convenience of this model we know from what has previously been discussed and from the research that Tate and Turner did that interpreters do not behave like machines. Tate and Turner suggest also that the code prevents interpreters from discussing these issues because of requirements for confidentiality (ibid 2002, p.55). They state:

The hegemony of ‘machine is the only way because it’s the only way to be uninvolved’ has created a conspiracy of silence – not an actively desired one on the part of practitioners, but one which they feel duty-bound to observe nonetheless – about the very real disempowering effects of a blanket aspiration to machine-like behaviour. (ibid 2002, p.55)

This statement suggests that the code of conduct acts like one of Foucault’s technologies of power to bluntly prohibit any paternalistic behaviour by interpreters, but inadvertently inhibits them doing a good job because instead they are forced to “exercis[e] power covertly” (ibid 2002, p.55).

The code of conduct and code of ethics have had a chequered history, which Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2015) trace to the best of their ability but without publishing the codes in full. Online research does not produce any copies of historical codes and so it is difficult to collate the codes into a single place and compare them or show their evolution. What we do know is that in 2010 the National Registers for Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) took over the holding of the register from CACDP (it should be noted that the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters’ code is not being referred to here). According to Llewellyn-Jones and Lee, between 2010-2012 the code stated that interpreters should not intervene or give their opinion (2015, p.4), stressing the need for impartiality. This is no longer found in the code of conduct. The code was consulted on in 2015 and changed as a result of that consultation to the one that is now published on the NRCPD website. The current code does not include any statements about neutrality or impartiality. It makes clear that talking to other professionals about interpreting is allowable for professional development and that preparing for assignments by speaking with clients does not break the obligation of confidentiality (NRCPD 2018). The ethical principles enshrined in the code include: do no harm, strive to do good, act justly and fairly, be honest, keep your word and respect the personal choices of service users (NRCPD 2018). In essence, the

code has shifted with scholarly innovations, to some extent. However, the question in my mind is whether the profession itself and the discourses it uses are shifting with these changes in scholarly and professional discourse.

Martin claims that “[t]he idea that the interpreter should be invisible, neutral and impartial reflects the prevalent professional ideology as reflected in codes of professional ethics” (2005, p.89–90). She is referring to spoken language interpreters more widely here. Dean (2014), focusing on the SLI, offers evidence from one training webinar conducted in the USA which suggests that the normative messages of the profession remain stuck in a prescriptive approach. She states, “[t]he interpreting profession seems to believe that *maintaining their role* (only taking action when message transfer is compromised) is the most effective way to engage in social cooperation” (Dean 2014, p.72, *italics in original*). It appears to be the case that the professionals have not caught up with the research.

Shaffer (2013) discusses the metaphor of the conduit and its lasting impact on the profession over decades. Insightfully she summarizes the impact of the metaphor thus:

In the case of interpreting, we first created metaphors of our professional role that described us as passively conveying information, not influencing the communicative event. That metaphor pervades the literature on both interpreter role and message analysis. The metaphor, rather than simply a means for describing our role, began to shape our role *and* our work. (Shaffer 2013, p.129, *italics in original*)

Shaffer follows the establishment of the SLI profession in the US and cites examples where scholars and practitioners describe the role of the SLI in terms that reflect the conduit model. In one practitioner resource the analogy of a telephone is used, “the telephone is a link between people that does not exert a personal influence on either” (Neumann-Solow 1981, p.ix). Shaffer (2013) emphasizes, like Tate and Turner (2002), that the conduit model’s aim was to promote autonomy for deaf people, however, the model had a ripple effect into research and from research into interpreter training programs. Shaffer refers to the development of the role as it currently stands in opposition to the conduit role as “our active role” (2013, p.138), and she believes that this active role links well with the *bilingual/bicultural mediator model* and also the *ally model*. The bilingual/bicultural approach (also referred to as Bi-Bi) promotes the interpreter adding information to render the message more meaningful, in particular where cultural

references cannot be expected to be understood by those outside the culture (see Humphrey and Alcorn 2001; Stewart, Schein and Cartwright 2004). According to Stewart, Schein and Cartwright “[i]n effect, Bi-Bi allows interpreters the latitude to define their precise role on a situation-by-situation basis” (2004, p.36), sometimes assuming an ally role (which is discussed in more detail in section 3.4.3). In the literature surrounding this model there are frequent references to ‘cultural mediation’ which remains only vaguely defined, partly because a definition of culture is hard to attain, and culture is ever evolving, but an ill-defined term can also be abused by SLIs to rationalise behaviours that are ethically questionable.

Cultural differences are a source of conflict within the history of professionalisation of SLIs. It seems the pendulum swing, from helper to detached professional, was too extreme and brought about an alienating disjuncture with the signing deaf community because hearing values conflicted with deaf signers’ values (Pollitt 1997, 2000). In fact, the clash of cultures is explicitly described by Pollitt, “[t]he wider cultural conflict between the individualistic, Thatcherite values of hearing Britain in the ‘80s and ‘90s, and the collectivist, reciprocity-driven values of the Deaf community was reinforced in microcosm in every interpreter event” (Pollitt 1997, p.2). This corresponds to Rudvin’s (2007) analysis of professionalism cross-culturally. She argues that the ethnocentricity of professionalism means that different participants have different perspectives about professional behaviour. Drawing on an example of a Japanese interpreter and comparing that with an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ interpreter she describes the different approaches that these interpreters use,

S/he will, therefore, support his/her own team, protect the team from confrontation and rudeness, and advise team members on how to counteract opposition tactics rather than maintaining a ‘neutral distance’. In a typically Western achievement-oriented, individualist culture the interpreter feels more comfortable in an ‘independent and neutral’ role, where the only aim of interpreting is to give an accurate account of the interlocutors’ utterances, and the interpreter does not serve the interests of either party. (Rudvin, 2007, p.62)

A profession, and particularly a profession that is global, is culture-bound despite codes of conduct and ethics according to Rudvin. Part of that culture is a hearing, hegemonic, ethnocentric perspective of professionalism, which, when imposed onto a group whose values remain collectivist (see Ladd, 2003), is a manifestation of hearing privilege. Kent

(2007) applies this analysis to the sign language interpreting profession in the US. An unintended and “ironic” consequence of the professionalisation there is, “that interpreters have become a focal target for Deaf criticism of audist behaviors and practices” (Kent 2007, p.193). She is keen to highlight caution as SLIs consider continued professionalisation not least because they need to “minimize collusion with systemic oppression” (ibid 2007, p.194), unintended as it may be. She also points out that professionalisation “further institutionalizes the privilege of members of the dominant language group by granting them the authority of a professional credential” (ibid 2007, p.100). The US context has its own complexities, specifically written into the code of conduct and Kent focuses on this. She insightfully critiques the code (which was written in collaboration with the National Association of the Deaf as an attempt to counteract audism) by giving the deaf signing clients choices about who they choose to interpret for them, where they might sit in an interaction and “interpreting dynamics”, a phrase which is not elucidated further in the code. However, she argues, this attempt has been pitched at the lowest level possible of the professional activity. Neutrality or impartiality is removed from the role of the interpreter because they are required to privilege the deaf participant. It seems the pendulum has swung again. Furthermore, the ironic outcome of this anti-audist collaboration is that deaf participants are located as disadvantaged “victims” and interpreters as “privileged rescuers” (ibid 2007, p.100), colluding in a pitfall that Freire identifies as an oppressor trait. For SLIs who are trying to manage the oppressive aspects of their professionalisation, whilst looking to empower the minority language group whom they serve, there remains a dilemma fraught with tensions. As Bahadir points out,

The normalizing aspect of professionalization denies the interpreter the flexibility required for adapting to every new situation into which she enters, or rather intrudes, when performing her task... (Bahadir 2010, p.126)

Returning to the UK, Pollitt (1997) encourages her fellow interpreters to work with the signing deaf community to uncover what professional behaviour would look like from their perspective, something that she admits is a complex issue since at the time of publication signing deaf professionals were few. It is likely that there are now more deaf professionals, although they may work in chiefly hearing workplaces and have to follow hearing professional values. Would they be any closer to understanding signing deaf professional values given these circumstances? This raises the further question; do the

signing deaf community have a homogenous concept of what a professional is and how they ought to behave?

Professionalisation can also lead to mystification of the work of interpreting. To combat this esoteric state of affairs, Turner (2007) has urged SLIs, as a professional priority, to be transparent in their work and redistribute the responsibilities held by all members of an interpreted interaction. He terms this type of practice “quantum interpreting”. In so doing, Turner wishes to demystify the field of interpreting so that the primary participants are aware of what is happening and feel invited to be co-producers in the event, rather than naïve, passive speakers/signers. In collaborating and co-producing it follows that power relations and privilege need to be acknowledged, increasing accountability for interpreters but also for participants. Dickinson and Turner push further for a “re-distribution of responsibilities” (2009, p.172) which have, up until this point, been the sole responsibility of the interpreter. They point out that interpreters still often think of themselves as invisible and those on the receiving end of the interpretation consider interpreters to be detached information givers. Their research proves that despite scholarly progress in these matters, the entrenched beliefs of practitioners have not.

Dickinson’s (2010) research reveals interesting conflicts for interpreters in workplace settings. They find themselves trying to avoid colluding in oppressive behaviours by talking too often to hearing colleagues of the deaf employee. However, this in turn can be perceived as cold and unfriendly, potentially leading to tense relationships between the interpreter, deaf employee and hearing colleagues. This has led to the development of strategies for avoiding eye-contact with hearing people, not making small-talk and not responding to direct engagement (Dickinson and Turner, 2009). All of this stems from a confusion about the role of the interpreter that is rarely explicitly discussed. Although the research does not specifically talk about power relations they are implicit within the comments that the interpreters make. They are continually balancing their clients’ needs, their own needs, how much of their own identity they reveal, and are concerned that the signing deaf client is not disadvantaged by the presence of a ‘disruptive’ interpreter. All of this requires an understanding of the professional field, social capital and their own habitus. The responsibility of the SLIs, if they want this situation to change, is to begin educating all stakeholders in the interpreting service in what they can expect and, crucially, to listen to their concerns. As Dickinson and Turner put it, SLIs “are all too aware of the fine line of oppression/advocacy on which they continually balance and will have to tread a delicate path in terms of making

themselves more visible in the workplace” (ibid, p.181). The research applies particularly to the workplace but can be extended to community interpreting more generally as these interactions, though short-lived, still have the potential for role confusion.

Turner and Best (2017) further this call for transparent interpreting practice by urging for *expository interpreting* as opposed to defensive interpreting. Defensive interpreting represents the interpreter interested in self-preservation, where following the perceived rules of the profession rather than using professional judgement keeps her safe from breaches that might affect her reputation. The norms of the SLI profession, communicated through education and training institutions have perpetuated this type of defensive interpreting or, as Dean and Pollard put it, the “do-nothing stance” (2011, p.161), for over fifteen years (Dean, 2014). The alternative to this style of practice is *expository interpreting* in which collaboration and transparency are encouraged. Rather than being motivated by self-preservation, the priority of this professional practice is the best interests of the clients. The impetus for practicing in this way is “institutional responsibility” (Turner, 2000) which values the social good at the heart of the interpreting act, rather than the transaction of a service. This orientation to the profession of interpreting encourages partnership, something which Freire prizes in the struggle for social justice. Similarly, the priority of dialectical learning which Freire also promotes is reflected in this approach to interpreting, as Turner and Best write, “the practice of meaning-making is understood as a profoundly and, indeed, necessarily collaborative process” (2017, p.112).

In an effort to provide a framework for practicing critically reflective interpreting, Dean and Pollard have applied Karasek and Theorell’s demand-control theory to the profession of interpreting to promote a more reflective and critical approach to what they term a ‘practice profession’ (2011). They liken the profession to other practice professions in which there is a lengthy period of internship (e.g. doctors and counsellors) and close supervision so that the initiate can experience the decision-making processes of other professionals, learn to become critical of their own experiences and reflect regularly on their own conduct. As the theory suggests by its name, ‘controls’ are a tool that the practice professional uses to manage the demands they are faced with. Dean and Pollard’s demand-control schema (DC-S) recognises that interpreters are highly visible and have an impact on the interpreting process, and that they should consciously apply controls recognising the consequences of those controls on the situation. This makes the SLI a powerful agent, something they do not deny. Dean and Pollard tell us that interpreters “are frequently unable to reflect and articulate why and how they make these

decisions” (Dean and Pollard 2011, p.167) due to their education and training. Drawing on Malcolm Gladwell’s (2005) work on decision-making they discuss the concept of intuition. Intuition can be likened, I believe, to Bourdieu’s habitus because it is informed by social and cultural factors, among others. If it remains hidden and unconscious it can become a liability. Dean and Pollard recommend following the DC-S schema because it:

seeks to foster a comprehensive yet objective perception of the interpreting context, which in turn requires continual awareness, and insight, into one’s *intrapersonal* landscape and its potential to bias one’s perceptions and decision making. (Dean and Pollard, 2014, p.169 *italics in original*)

Examining the intrapersonal landscape fits well with Freire’s desire for critical thinking about unconscious behaviours. They promote reflective learning and supervisory relationships which engage in ‘dialogic work analysis’ (ibid 2014, p.161) to gain better insights into all of the demands and controls that interpreters face. My research seeks to explore, more closely, the potential for discriminatory, privileged and oppressive areas of the intrapersonal landscape to see how interpreters are currently reflecting on them and how these have consequences on practice professionals.

Professionalisation of signed language interpreting made the people using their services into stakeholders. The perspective of deaf signing stakeholders should be considered to gain insights into how the emerging roles and codes impacted on them.

3.4.2 The Experience of Deaf Signers as Interpreting Stakeholders

In the last decade research into the perspectives of signing deaf people about SLIs has been conducted. Taking into account the views of signing deaf consumers has, until recently, been restricted to their comprehension of the interpreted message or to anecdotal evidence from deaf academics (Napier, 2011). However, of late, emphasis has been placed on interpersonal aspects of the relationship between service providers and consumers. Two such studies focus on this aspect of the dynamic of interpreting (Napier and Rohan 2007; Napier 2011). These studies revealed that signing deaf consumers think interpreters need an understanding of their consumers, the context in which they are interpreting, professional behaviour and a “good attitude” (Napier and Rohan 2007). In Napier’s (2011) study she goes on to dig deeper into what this “good attitude” may entail. About this Napier writes:

Of particular interest was the amount of time dedicated by deaf participants and interpreters to talking about interpreters having a “good attitude”, when this was not touched on at all by hearing (non-interpreter) participants. This implies an implicit trait of interpreters that is culturally valued within the deaf community, that it is essential for signed language interpreters to be aware of, and embrace. (Napier 2011, p.82)

This implicit trait is intriguing. Is this trait about connection and alliance with the signing deaf community? If an oppressed, minority group are reliant on interpreters (who are members of the hearing, dominant majority) then they are inevitably put in a vulnerable position. Hearing consumers do not require interpreters to have this trait, because they do not perceive themselves as disempowered. Therefore, the trait that the minority might desire the most, is that the interpreter is an ally, or at least that they understand the position of that minority and respect and regulate the power they hold over them.

Interestingly, SLIs in Napier’s study did not suggest that their understanding of deaf history and culture or their self-awareness with regard to power were important qualities that interpreters should have. They did express that “being ‘tested’ by deaf people as to their motives for being an interpreter” (Napier 2011, p.68) was a negative aspect of their job. Certainly, ‘testing’ may appear socially inappropriate and as though the interpreter is under suspicion, however the motivation for doing it could be understood through the lens of hearing privilege; if you have never met a SLI before you might want to know where they stand in relation to your community, and ‘testing’ may be one attempt, albeit an inelegant one, to do that.

Napier concludes by saying that having a good attitude involves interpreters allying themselves with the deaf community (Napier 2011). This reference to allying behaviour is not defined further in these studies. Issues of trust have prompted work on the ‘ally interpreter’, something that is becoming even more of a focus in the US in interpreter-education programs.

Wither-Merithew and Johnson (2005) claim that SLIs are privileged by being members of the majority who can gain “unencumbered access to a wide range of communication systems” (2005, p.32). In their research in the US, they interviewed 25 deaf consumers of interpreting services about what they want in a competent SLI. They document the opinions of these consumers and conclude that an important issue for them, alongside linguistic competence, is, once again, a good ‘interpreter attitude’. This attitude is defined as a SLI’s “linguistic and cultural competence, and professionalism” (2005,

p.35). They go on to suggest that an appropriate attitude would respect deaf people, their language and identity through sincere engagement with the deaf community but not an over-identification with them. Over-identification might manifest as acting as an advocate rather than as an ally (see the next section 3.4.3) or as a desire for “frequent affirmation” (ibid, p.38). In fact, many of the traits that deaf consumers did not want reflect the oppressor traits that Freire defines (see section 2.5.2 and 3.4.3 below), for example, paternalistic rescuers who do not believe in deaf people’s capacity to self-determine. The traits that deaf consumers did want reflect the ‘partnering traits’ I have identified (see section 2.5.2) for example, a collaborative approach to the work, mutual respect and transparency.

These insights into the desires of consumers help to construct a concept of an SLI who is matching the needs of the stakeholders (at least one half of the stakeholders). The concept of the ally interpreter seems to be one that repeats itself and therefore is worth visiting in more detail.

3.4.3 The Ally Interpreter – Integrating Freire’s Framework

Because the deaf community is a minority group, much of the cultural mediation that sign language interpreters do is related to explaining or equalising the deaf client’s position, rather than *vice versa*. As a result, interpreters can also be seen as ‘allies’ in the deaf community’s struggle for empowerment. (Napier, McKee, Goswell 2010, p.65)

This ally relationship requires that the interpreter have cultural competence in both hearing and signing deaf communities but not only that, it also requires an understanding of audism (Witter-Merithew and Johnson 2005). Inevitably, where a service is being provided there is the added complexity of power held by those with the most cultural capital (see Bourdieu’s capital section 2.2.2), and so the interpreter has to hold in tension their own privilege and their professional power; not overstepping their role as a facilitator of communication but at times attempting to redress the imbalance of power in an interpreting situation (depending of course on the event and the participants), involving themselves in the signing deaf community enough that they are understood as trustworthy but not ‘over-identifying’ with them and speaking on their behalf (Witter-Merithew and Johnson 2005).

The relationship between a SLI and a signing deaf client differs from that of a spoken language interpreter because “signed language interpreters additionally function as mediators between members of the powerful majority (hearing) and members of the oppressed minority (deaf). And most signed language interpreters, by virtue of their hearing status, are members of that powerful majority.” (Baker-Shenk 1986, p.43). Though there are situations in which spoken language interpreters belong to the dominant majority, as we have seen refugee or asylum-seeking situations are one example, however, SLIs must understand this dynamic in every interaction. In reaction to this idea, Baker-Shenk introduced to the sign language interpreting profession the idea of allying. She used the framework of Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) to shed light on the relationship between a SLI and the clients they work with, in particular the deaf signers. In an article on the characteristics of oppressed and oppressor people she mentions several traits of oppressors, summarised here:

- 1 A “pejorative view of the oppressed” as incapable, untrustworthy etc...
- 2 A paternalistic attitude toward the oppressed minority, assuming knowledge of what their needs are and providing for those needs without asking for their opinion.
- 3 A need for gratitude from the oppressed minority.
- 4 A “possessive consciousness”, which regards the minority owned by the majority.
- 5 The perception that liberation of the oppressed group takes away the majority group’s freedom i.e. loss of power feels like loss of freedom for the oppressor.

(Paraphrased from Baker-Shenk 1986, p.49,50)

We can see the direct correlation here between oppressor traits and the attitudes that characterise hearing privilege. Baker-Shenk attempts to apply this to hearing sign language interpreters to reveal hearing privilege in their status, work and attitudes. She does this tentatively because she knows that this is a very sensitive topic, but she is earnest in her desire to analyse how this privilege works and how unconscious oppressor identities can maintain the *status quo*. She applies these characteristics and gives

examples of how they might impact on the interpreted event. Many are linked to the status of American Sign Language (ASL) at that time (thirty years ago) in which the interpreter devalues ASL in various ways. She also alludes to “interpreter control” where interpreters intervene in ways that might be labelled paternalistic (Baker-Shenk 1986, p.52). Her analysis is informed by deaf people but does not investigate the views and perspectives of deaf people. Baker-Shenk (1991) reminds SLIs that they have a lot of power and stand between deaf signers and the information they need, whilst being a representative of a majority of hearing people who have behaved oppressively towards them for generations. She makes her point by critiquing the machine model approach to interpreting, which was intended to equalise power:

In other words, by acting as if Deaf and hearing interactants were on equal footing and by not making conscious choices to help correct the imbalance of power, we help the hearing interactant maintain his/her greater power and help maintain the disempowerment of the Deaf interactant. We help perpetuate an unjust system. (Baker-Shenk 1991, p.4)

Her solution to this conundrum is for the ally interpreter to use their power to equalize the power dynamics in the interpreted event but without overstepping and controlling. This requires a keen self-awareness and the ability to connect with and take leadership from the signing deaf community (ibid 1991). It involves collaboration with the deaf participant in particular in order to redress the power dynamic that hearing interpreters are inclined to maintain with the hearing participant. The paper in which this is discussed is a translated and transcribed presentation and includes the contributions from students and interpreters (Ron Coffey, Risa Shaw, Sandra Gish and Chuck Snyder) who offer suggestions for what allying might look like. I have created a list of the types of actions that are discussed which are recommended as ways to “equalise the power relations” (ibid p.16):

1. Pre-assignment discussions with deaf signers (as well as hearing client)
2. Providing information about how a system works to a deaf signer in order for them to be able to act on it
3. Acknowledging a deaf person first when arriving at a job and discussing logistics with them, rather than the hearing person
4. Using body language to ensure the deaf signer does not think the SLI is aligned with the hearing client

5. Turn-taking in culturally appropriate ways that have been discussed with the deaf signer
6. Giving prior-knowledge about the assignment to deaf signing clients
7. Using a deaf relay interpreter when it is appropriate
8. Dressing appropriately for the job (for example not wearing a business suit to a student event)
9. Redirecting questions aimed at the interpreter to include the deaf signer
10. Being transparent with the deaf signer about how an assignment went and how to improve
11. Using consecutive interpreting instead of simultaneous when appropriate to improve quality

(paraphrased and collated from Baker-Shenk 1991)

These suggestions value partnering traits that I found in Freire's work (see section 2.5.2): showing solidarity with the oppressed person, working in a horizontal rather than hierarchical way and being transparent and accountable.

We are fifteen years on from this published paper and very little has been done to research how the ally interpreter handles their role, manages the dynamics of an interpreted event, or what language they use to describe the strategies they use. The model, if it can really be called that, is very underdeveloped. The research I propose will address these issues of power dynamics and hearing privilege in signed language interpreting.

From recent online articles by SLIs we see evidence that these concerns are being considered regularly, in the US in particular. Blogs about the issues of privilege and power, dual identities, managing your own bias and other topics are appearing on a regular basis (see Storme 2015; Brace 2012; Nelson 2012; Suggs 2012). One such article by Brace (2012), in an online practitioner blog (Streetleverage.com), addresses the attempt at ally interpreting and recognises the paradoxical nature of the profession as this excerpt shows:

Inspiring trust and delight in my customers happens, rather paradoxically, more easily when they feel I understand that there's no real reason they should trust me, and that the reason for my presence, at all, is something less than delightful. They need me to be aware that I come with potentially harmful side effects [...] (Brace, 2012)

In another observation about this topic, Brace tells us that he resists thinking about issues like these because he thinks they entail a life of constant apology:

I'm not sure I'll ever fully understand my duality as both ally and enemy in the lives of Deaf people without some measure of guilt. Like many members of privileged groups, I hope to learn the right way to behave toward an oppressed group – once – and never again have to feel unsure of myself or guilty about my privilege. I seek constant validation as 'one of the good ones'. I believe this takes a psychic toll on Deaf people, though – even those who know me well and truly value what I have to offer – when I deny there's a shadow cast by even my worthiest efforts. (Brace, 2012)

This conflict seems never-ending, how can an interpreter manage this daily schizophrenic dance? It seems likely to cause burnout for SLIs. Likewise, Nelson (2012) makes specific reference to hearing privilege and challenges SLIs to:

begin by analyzing our own privilege as interpreters. Whether we are White, non-Deaf, able-bodied, straight, employed, male, educated, cisgender⁷, or a combination of these and other identities it can be challenging to recognise our own privilege. Without having experienced the impact of being perceived as 'Other' it is hard to intimately connect with the realities faced by those experiencing systematic marginalization and oppression on a daily basis. (Nelson 2012)

These references to interpreter-generated articles reveal, at least in the US, a deep concern with issues of power, alliance with deaf people and acknowledgment of hearing privilege as well as intersecting privileges. This concern, born out of a detachment from the deaf community by interpreters, has been echoed by Cokely (2011), and Shaw (2014) supports the concept of service learning for trainee interpreters as a way for them to 'reenfranchise' the signing deaf community, promote alliance work and partnering with the community whilst still maintaining a professional ethic and practice as an interpreter. In some ways alliance work is being separated out from interpreting here, for trainees to gain valuable experience within the signing deaf community and align themselves with the objectives

⁷ Cisgender – Designating a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds to his or her sex at birth (Oxford English Dictionary). The origin of this term is disputed but it is generally accepted that it became increasingly popular in the 1990s in an online forum called Usenet (Dame 2017).

of the community. However, the concept of an ally interpreter is not addressed, other than how to be an ally separately from being an interpreter. The question remains, how can an ally interpreter work to undo their privilege whilst being an interpreter? Or, conversely, assuming an interpreter is an ally of the deaf community how does this impact on their role as an interpreter?

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to trace the scholarship in interpreting studies that grapples with the interactional and participatory nature of the practice of interpreting. This was followed by literature that links to the sociological turn in the field and the focus on power and agency as a consequence of that. In the last part of this chapter I looked at the professionalisation of interpreting and the impact this has had on notions of interpreter role. This led to a discussion about deaf consumers of interpreting services, more specifically, and the concept of the ally model of interpreting which takes into account oppressive structures and discrimination, which the conduit model did not. Though both of these models, conduit and ally, were originally intended as empowering for the deaf clients, their definitions are, respectively, too restrictive or underdeveloped. The literature lacks any sophisticated account of interpreting practice that acknowledges the oppressive structures and discriminatory attitudes that deaf signers are subject to and how to manage these underlying power dynamics. My research aims to broach this subject in more depth and contribute to the gap in knowledge.

Chapter 4: Methods and Methodology

Like qualitative research generally, narrative research often critiques cultural discourses, institutions, organizations, and interactions that produce social inequalities. Narrative researchers frequently look for the collusive or resistant strategies that narrators develop in relation to the constraints of their narrative environments. (Chase 2011, p.430)

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to clearly set out my position as a researcher and the methods and methodology used for this study. I will describe the process through which I engaged participants, collected data, processed that data and analysed it. This chapter will cover the methodology I have chosen to complement my research questions and the methods I employed for data collection. I will then briefly describe my scoping study (4.3) and the consequences of its outcome, my main study (4.4), processing of the data (4.5), the methods of analysis of the data (4.6) and conclusion. In beginning this chapter, I would like to position myself so that the reader can understand the perspective that I take as a researcher and the impact that this has on my approach to data.

4.2 Positioning of the Researcher

In section 1.2 of the first chapter of this thesis, I briefly discussed my background and how it brought me to the research that I am interested in. In this section I intend to dig deeper and position myself more clearly for the reader, in order to be as transparent as possible. As a hearing researcher, I position myself within the dominant oppressive majority with regard to deaf people. I grew up in a hearing family with no connection to deaf signing people until I was in my teenage years. I lived in a town where there was a residential school for the deaf and became interested as a consequence of meeting students my age from that institution. In my twenties, I graduated from Bristol University and entered the workforce as a trainee SLI and worked for almost four years as a full-time interpreter. Subsequently, I moved to French-speaking Quebec in Canada and spent eight years there adapting to a new culture and language as well as working as an advisor to disabled students in a University context. I gained a Masters in Disability Studies, during my time in Canada, that focussed heavily on the social model of disability, in

which the barriers to inclusion in society for disabled people are situated in the environment and attitudes rather than in the individual with an impairment.

I want to start discussing my positionality with a story from the PhD journey. I am going to offer the reader an excerpt from my research diary which I wrote just as I launched the recruitment drive for my research. I had just posted various adverts on websites, social media and using different email lists to try and enlist participants. The recruitment material included a written English advert and a spoken English video clip, which I hoped would make me appear more human and approachable.

I made a mistake at this juncture because I did not subtitle the video clip. Consequently, deaf signers interested in the research could not access this information. This incident caused me to consider my position as a hearing person within a hearing academic institution and the assumptions I had made about who this research would have an impact on. The incident had such an impact on me I used a red pen to write in my journal that day, what follows is a transcription of my hand-written research journal entry.

30 May 2016

A RED PEN DAY

On Friday [three days earlier] I launched the recruitment drive for my research – Facebook, twitter, ASLI (& emailed SASLI and VLP) and eNEWSLI⁸. Today I engaged six SLIs in the reflective diaries! Woohoo. I'm really excited.

One issue arose on Facebook – I hadn't subtitled the recruitment video (because it was aimed at hearing SLIs) but I got a smack-down from [a deaf signer]. Trying to remain humble and not defensive. I subtitled it and apologized. PRIVILEGE.

Figure 2 Transcribed excerpt from my research diary

This encounter with my own privilege and power made me reflect on my positionality. In the rest of this section I will narrate my own stance as a researcher, as an individual and as a former interpreter.

⁸ ASLI is the Association for Sign Language Interpreters, SASLI is the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters, VLP is the Visual Language Professionals all of which provide professional services to SLIs in the UK and have networks for distributing adverts about participation in research. eNEWSLI is a listserve which goes out to any SLIs who have joined and does not depend on affiliation with an association.

Young and Temple clearly argue that “how we define, understand, and represent what it is to be d/Deaf is central to the methodological decisions we make about how to carry out a piece of research” (2014, p.103). I understand the British context in which I live and work to be audist (see section 2.4.1). Therefore, in collecting the stories of SLIs I recognise that their narratives are rooted within this audist society. Kusters, De Meulder and O’Brien (2017) emphasize the need for hearing researchers to contextualise their standpoint within the socio-political structures within which they are situated and to reflect on their positionality. Although I am not researching the lives of deaf people, I am researching SLIs who have an impact on deaf peoples’ lives and, like Napier and Leeson (2016), I believe it is important to acknowledge my background, connection with deaf people and motivation for doing research.

I am aligned with postmodernist approaches to social research, rejecting views about reality as a knowable and rational truth. I take the ontological stance of the social constructionist, understanding the world not as an objective reality but routinely constructed by people (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2009; Young and Temple, 2014). I am interested in the ways in which interpreters create meaning and knowledge about their reality. Consequently, I have chosen qualitative methods to collect data. One way of constructing knowledge is through stories and these narratives shape the individual’s reality (Etherington 2004). I have chosen to examine the narratives that SLIs tell about their work in order to access their meaning-making strategies. By examining these stories, I aim to make an addition to the “generation of knowledge that opens up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes ‘truths’” (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2000, p.5).

I understand that I am a part of the construction of the social reality I present in this thesis (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2000; Young & Temple 2014). Therefore, reflexivity in research is a priority for me because it has many benefits: by describing my own motivations readers can better understand the research and validate the findings; it adds rigour to the research process because it requires a recognition of my own perspectives; and, it has the potential to equalise the power differential between the subjects of the research and the researcher (Etherington 2004).

Though SLIs would not be considered a vulnerable group of people, by most research standards, historically their voices have often been marginalized due to a focus on more positivist accounts in the 1990’s of what SLIs do (Boéri & de Manuel Jerez 2011), through observation of their interpreting output using neuroscientific methods, for example. There are notable exceptions in more current research where the voices of

interpreters are sought out (see Angelelli, 2004; Napier 2011; Dickinson and Turner 2009; Brunson 2011; McKee 2008; Napier, Skinner & Turner 2017). Research which incorporates the daily reality of SLIs and their narratives of power dynamics has the potential to impact on their practice because it reflects their language back to them. By centring their stories, I hope to centre their preoccupations and offer them a critical reading of their daily realities. SLIs do not regularly have the opportunity to ‘speak’ for themselves as the job they do often requires them to restrict expression of their own opinions. It therefore seems important that they were offered a space within this research to express themselves. Though this research cannot be categorised as participatory (Wurm & Napier, 2017) because the participants did not guide the research topic or dialogue with me on the findings, I have taken care throughout to treat them as knowledge constructors and experts in their profession. I see them as researchers as much as I see myself as a researcher (Wurm & Napier, 2017) because I have asked them to reflect on their practice and offer that up for further critical analysis.

I bring to my research my own hearing, able-bodied, white, Eurocentric, and academic privileges. Though these are privileges, they are double-sided as they also produce biases in my interpretation of data. To combat this, to some extent, I have chosen to use critical theory which combines an interpretivist approach to data, a critical view of social realities and emancipatory principles (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000). By using Freire’s framework for examining the data I collected I hope to challenge the *status quo* in the signed language interpreting profession around issues of power. Alvesson and Sköldberg offer guidelines for the researcher who espouses critical theory:

One guideline for the independent researcher could be to pose various research questions that certain elite groups are reluctant to have answered, but which might be crucial from the perspective of some disadvantaged minority. Another could be to ask questions that are an insult to common sense, the idea being to promote a kind of thinking which differs radically from established modes, in other words not simply adapting to the conventional views. (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000, p.132)

My background and experience as a trained SLI has led me to want to question the professional norms in the interpreting profession as they currently stand. In particular, I want to scrutinize the norms surrounding the responsibilities of the SLI in relation to power dynamics. Issues of power are often uncomfortable for SLIs but extremely

pertinent to deaf signers who deal with them daily. In order to promote deeper reflection about power dynamics I utilize aspects of critical discourse analysis and narrative inquiry, as well as Freire's critical framework, to scrutinize the perceptions of SLIs in new ways. My aim in all of this has been to add value to the interpreting profession by offering a refined framework for reflective practice in an under-researched area of the profession.

Having trained and worked as a sign language interpreter I have had the honour and the opportunity to see a way of being and living that revolves around the appreciation and use of sign language. The members of the cultural-linguistic minority of deaf signers who have generously trusted me and shared their way of life have opened up opportunities which have made me consider different values and challenged and changed my own. I bring this experience to my research and have woven that understanding into my approach.

My research sits between three fields of study: interpreting studies, Deaf studies and sociology. Although this research is about signed language interpreters and not focussed on deaf signers, changed behaviours by SLIs resulting from this research would impact on deaf and hearing clients. It is also the case that I situate my research within a framework of social justice for deaf people and within a model of partnering with minority oppressed peoples with the aim of promoting equality (see Freire's work in section 2.5.2). These decisions stem from my background in Deaf studies. By applying them to interpreting studies without the perspective of a collaborator who is a deaf signer I am aware that an important perspective is missing. I have considered how to include the perspectives of deaf signers in this research since the inception of the study. One option for this study could have been to research the views of deaf signers about power dynamics in interpreting situations, however, as a hearing academic I do not feel that I am in a credible position to do this. My positioning is inappropriate for authoring the views of deaf people, as I do not have the linguistic or cultural capital that my deaf signing colleagues have for this type of inquiry (O'Brien and Emery 2013). Instead I preferred to use my cultural capital as a trained interpreter to explore the perspectives of interpreters themselves. I have considered my position as a guest in the field of Deaf Studies (O'Brien and Emery 2013) and at the beginning stages of this research I discussed with a deaf signing academic my intentions and subsequently the philosophical perspectives and frameworks that I could use as I approached the study. This has impacted on my decision-making throughout the course of my study. However, I remain acutely aware that "it is difficult, if not by definition impossible, for the researchers to clarify the taken-for-

granted assumptions and blind spots in their own social culture, research community and language” (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000:6). Undoubtedly, I have my own blind spots.

One decision that has resulted from these considerations was that of sharing my research findings with two stakeholders in interpreting. The aim of doing this is to receive critical feedback from a practicing interpreter and a deaf signing consumer of interpreting services in order to check my own interpretation of the findings. This partnering with stakeholders opens the research up to some critical dialogue in the Freirean style and offers some counterbalance to my own privileged perspectives. Being open to discussion with critical partners “allows us to check for distortions in our interpretations that might be based on past experiences held outside our full awareness, or based on indoctrination within our personal or social cultures that we may have accepted without question since early childhood” (Etherington 2004, p.29).

As a qualitative researcher, there is a growing expectation that I clarify my role in terms of being an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ to the group that I am studying. As someone who was trained and worked as an interpreter but who took a career decision to no longer practice I sit neither in the group nor outside of it but somewhere along the continuum (Breen 2007). Benefits of being an insider include having easier access to and relationships with the group under study and having a prior understanding of their ways of being, but these come with disadvantages as well; the potential to make erroneous assumptions based on prior knowledge as well as ethical considerations which emphasise the conflict between closeness to the research subjects and a need for distance in analysing the data (Bonner and Tollhurst 2002). I did experience some benefit from having been a working interpreter, particularly in my scoping study. Using contacts that I had built up during that time I was able to recruit the focus group without much difficulty, additionally the focus group were engaged in the topic and appeared very comfortable in my presence as I asked them to discuss issues of power. I also experienced some discomfort around the ethics of asking interpreters to entrust personal reflective journals to me and then finding the distance to critically analyse their stories, being an outsider however, has to some extent allowed for this distance.

Ultimately, my aim in doing this study is to understand the perceptions that interpreters have of the work they do and the power dynamics that they deal with on a daily basis. I would like to gain insight into their perspectives of power, furthermore I would like to better understand the ways in which they talk about power dynamics and the behaviours they report exhibiting as a result of their decisions. I aim to achieve something which Alvesson and Sköldberg present as an objective of critical theory:

A good interpretation forces us to think - and rethink. Thus, in a sense the interpretation must build upon the conceptions of people but at the same time it must challenge and problematize them. (2000, p.136)

4.3 Scoping Study

I will briefly describe the scoping study that I conducted in August 2015 in order to contextualise and draw out the conclusions which shaped the design of my main study. I recruited five SLIs through purposive and network sampling. I video-recorded a focus group in one geographical region of the UK. My aim for this scoping study was to explore the discourse of SLIs around power dynamics and in particular the concept of hearing privilege. I initially wanted to investigate whether the discussion about hearing privilege, which is a current subject in the US among the SLIs and deaf communities (see section 3.4.3), was something that was in evidence in the UK professional discourse. I wanted to situate my theoretical concerns and questions in the practical context to see if they had any resonance. In conducting the semi-structured focus group, I chose to keep the discussion of power dynamics as general as possible for the majority of the time we had by using a semi-structured protocol in which I asked broad questions about power dynamics. Towards the end of the time I followed up with a more focussed question about hearing privilege. This allowed me to analyse what SLIs discuss when prompted by the term 'power dynamics' before potentially muddying the waters with a specific aspect of power: hearing privilege.

What was revealed in the scoping study informed the approach I took to the main study in significant ways. I will therefore only mention briefly the consequences for the main study. One finding relates to the fact that the focus group of SLIs were very willing to talk about the different types of power in their work with ease and few prompts. They described experiencing discomfort around power dynamics, seeing power being exerted in different ways by different members of the triad or group in which they interpreted, and they gave different rationales for disrupting power dynamics depending on the context. They also displayed a significant amount of hedging when they talked amongst each other, perhaps because the professional values that they are expected to hold are sometimes in conflict with the reality of the job and possibly with their personal values. In the excerpt below, one interpreter from the scoping focus group discusses an interpreting job where she is working in a health appointment with a deaf man with

minimal language skills⁹, the deaf man's hearing mother and a hearing consultant. The consultant has been addressing all his remarks to the mother. The interpreter makes the decision to "really [up] my language choices for the client dramatically", by which she means raising the register of the language. This resulted in the consultant turning to address the deaf patient. The interpreter describes how this felt:

That was interesting because I felt totally out of control, I had no power in the situation. He [referring to the deaf man by turning to his space] was treated as an inferior, and I thought the only way I could think to kind of redress anything is to do that, which is really extreme, and see what happens, and that's what happened. So, of course it was successful in a way in that particular interaction, but not having anybody to hand that on to, in terms of whoever might be doing that person's next hospital appointment, there would have been a very weird experience, perhaps, for the consultant and the client next time. I just felt like it's a little bit of redress in this time. But I did really think about it afterwards and thought, oh, gosh, I'm not really allowed to do that, it was really extreme, but I found it very difficult to handle the inhumanity of the situation, and that's part of why some of us become sign language interpreters, I think, because of that slight bias. (Focus group participant)

This story reveals so many layers of power dynamics as the interpreter negotiates an interaction where the agency of the deaf patient is being ignored, by the mother and the consultant. The interpreter tells the group that she has no power and yet uses significant power to change the dynamic. She experiences discomfort in her reflection afterwards about whether she is 'allowed' to conduct herself in this way, but also experiences discomfort at the time due to the inhumane treatment of the deaf patient. She hedges her comments (using 'just', 'really', 'slight') as though unsure about whether this is acceptable professional conduct but is also open in giving her account of it. She also reminds her listeners that she realises her decision was 'extreme' twice as though to reassure them that she does not behave like this normally. What this reveals is that this whole area of power dynamics is complex, not well understood in relation to the

⁹ Minimal language skills or Minimal Language Competency as defined by Napier, McKee & Goswell is used to refer to socially and linguistically isolated deaf individuals who have not fully acquired a sign language and often have idiosyncratic signs and gestures (2010, pp.155, 156).

profession and a continual source of anxiety for SLIs. This area of study warrants further research because it produces such doubt-laden actions and reflections.

Another finding reveals that two of the five SLIs were cognizant of the concept of hearing privilege but the other three were not. This meant that I could not expect UK SLIs as a whole to be able to discuss this theory in relation to their work without first needing to educate them on it. But even more significant was the response that one SLI gave, after the video was switched off, in reaction to having the concept of hearing privilege explained. She said, “we don’t need another rod for our backs!” This struck me at the time and has remained with me throughout the study because, having been an interpreter myself, I regularly struggled with my professional values, my personal values of social justice, and my identity as a hearing person who belongs to an audist society. This comment therefore led me to reflect on the power I had as a researcher either to frame my research in a negatively critical way by pointing the proverbial finger at professional conduct, or to take an approach that could encourage professional reflexivity. This reflection led to a redirecting of initial research questions to focus on the conceptualization of power dynamics instead of hearing privilege. Consequently, I designed the main study taking into account the findings from the scoping study to refine the methodology and the research questions.

4.4 Main Study

I now turn to my main study and describe the processes by which I collected data and the methodological approach I took. I will focus on the research questions (4.3.1), the methodology I selected (4.3.2) and the ethical considerations I took into account (4.3.3). Following these I will describe the tool I chose for collecting data which was reflective journals (4.3.4), the recruitment process (4.3.5) and the participants (4.3.6).

4.4.1 Research Questions

The overarching research question is as follows:

How do SLIs conceptualise power dynamics within their professional practice?

In order to answer the main research question I devised the following sub-questions:

What language do SLIs use when they are narrating stories about power dynamics?

What actions and techniques do SLIs describe when they attempt to make an impact on power dynamics?

What rationales do SLIs offer for their actions and techniques?

What traits are revealed through the stories SLIs tell about power dynamics in their practice?

The first decision that I took is manifest in the questions; I decided not to observe interpreters in assignments but to focus on their stories of those assignments and the decisions and motivations that they offered. This led me to the methodology of narrative inquiry.

4.4.2 Methodology – Narrative Inquiry

Narratives are ontological and epistemological in the sense that they constitute the prisms through which we construct our identity and make sense of our lives. In other words, knowledge, life and self are all storied. (Boéri & De Manuel Jerez 2011, p.42).

The focus of narrative inquiry is language (Wells 2011), something that SLIs inherently rely on for their livelihood. Competency in two languages is at the heart of the profession but the capacity to reflect on professional practice and analytical skills is also crucial to growth and development as a professional (Dean 2015). What is clear about these competencies is that they both require language. I want to understand what SLIs are thinking about power dynamics, and although I might have chosen to watch them *in situ*, to observe how they react in the face of a power dynamic (Mason and Ren 2012), I preferred to discover how they tell the story of their professional decision-making in relation to the settings that they work in. Through stories, told by the practitioners themselves, I am better able to understand their motivations, their concept of power and to delve into their use of language as their stories unfold. As Wells states, “language frames how individuals construct problems and their solutions: that is, action” (2011, p.3). To be able to tell the story of power in interpreted interactions from the point of view of a researcher, it is important to first hear the stories of SLIs.

Narrative inquiry is a subtype of qualitative research that keeps the stories of individuals centre stage (Chase 2011). It offers the researcher the possibility to look closely at the language being used by the narrators by analysing the content, the structure,

and the performance of that language (Wells 2011) whilst at the same time searching for societal discourses that resonate in their language. These discourses reveal unconscious beliefs, values, or stubborn residues of the habitus (see section 2.2.2 on habitus), which will not be usurped easily. By adopting this approach, I hope to throw light on language use by SLIs so that they too can see how they construct the reality of their work and see how this can be both useful and positive and, contrastingly, unhelpful and negative. Young and Temple describe it thus, “[n]arrative analysis in its various forms is, therefore, fertile territory from which to understand a vast range of human experience; to explore, document, and appreciate that which is new or hidden; through which to identify factors relevant to specific intents; and as a result of which to challenge, protest, and reconstruct.” (2014, p.107). I intend to use narrative analysis to examine conscious and unconscious perceptions of power in order to appreciate the ways in which SLIs already work and to potentially challenge and reconstruct problematic elements.

Narrative inquiry takes many shapes and forms and holds tensions within itself (Chase 2011; Wells 2011; Riessman 2005). The type of inquiry that I am interested in values storytelling as lived experience and “narration [as] the practice of constructing meaningful selves, identities, and realities.” (Chase 2011, p.422). In constructing their stories SLIs could position themselves as, for example, distant professionals, engaged mediators or victims at the mercy of the other interlocutors, and these constructions impact on “how narrators position audience, characters, and themselves; and, reciprocally, how the audience positions the narrator” (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2013, p.109). In this strand of narrative inquiry there is a focus on the linguistic practices of the narrator and their relationship with cultural, societal and hegemonic discourses (Chase 2011; Wells 2011). This approach offers the opportunity to see how narrators resist or disrupt prevailing discourses. In my study I am interested in how SLIs maintain or disrupt dominant discourses of audism (see section 2.4.1) but I am also aware that the discourse of audism may leave residual marks, consciously or unconsciously. These competing discourses are in dialogue with each other and can complicate the stories of narrators. As Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou comment:

Those different I-positions are embodied as voices which establish dialogical relationships, both internal and external, with other voices. Both self and society consist of polyphony of consonant and dissonant voices, among which dialogical relationships of interchange, but also dominance or social power are continuously shaped. (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2013, pp.109-110)

The discomfort that SLIs felt that was evidenced in my scoping study could be caused by this polyphony of dissonant discourses causing inner conflict and narrative inquiry offers an approach for examining this.

That there are few mutually accepted rules for the practice of narrative inquiry does not seem to be a cause for concern within the field (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013, p.2), and in fact allows for a tailoring of methods to suit the research question. Many narrative researchers use interviews to gather data; however, this is not a rigid expectation and there are studies in which journals and diaries are used (Chase 2011), something which appeals to me. The combination of these two methods, something I have chosen to do, serves to strengthen the story-telling capacity of the participants, as they both write and talk about their experiences.

Wells (2011) focuses on narrative inquiry within the field of social work and she discusses the need to look into the ‘tacit dimensions of practice’. This concept transfers well to interpreting practice. This methodology suits the research question about what techniques of power are being used by SLIs. My search for the manifestation of power in the stories sits well within narrative studies because of the focus on the identity of the narrator and their sense of agency. However, this agency is tempered by the ways in which the narrators are constrained or compelled by the language they use and the discourses within which they reside, echoing elements of the constraining nature of Foucault’s hegemonic discourse and the compelling nature of Bourdieu’s habitus (see section 2.2). Narrative inquiry is flexible enough to allow for these ‘lived-in contradictions’ (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2013, p.3).

Some narrative inquiry focuses on research done around a shared narrative construction and this appealed to me for my study. I wanted to collect more than one or two SLIs’ reflections to compile a variety of perspectives creating a ‘composite voice’ (Shay 1994). I propose in my analysis to use quotations and extended excerpts to illustrate patterns of behaviour. Although I assign narratives to individuals in chapters 5 and 6, the discussion in chapter 7 pulls together the collage of voices and brings to the forefront the overarching themes.

Some narrative inquirers promote the study of theory prior to, and during the analysis of narratives in order to interpret the findings (Riessman 2008). This was a key factor in choosing this methodology rather than grounded theory because I was primed by my reading around theory on power to focus on particular aspects of the narratives. I own this perspective for my research though I made every effort to focus on the narratives

themselves and see what the stories of the ten individuals had to say so as not to force the stories into preconceived ‘codes’.

Wells (2011) and Chase (2011) include discourse analysis in their discussions of the many and varied ways in which narrative analysis is approached. This includes attention to metaphor and terminology usage, use of pronouns and hedging. I have incorporated these elements in order to understand the extent to which hegemonic discourses interrupt, structure or disrupt the stories of the SLIs. I discuss in more detail in section 4.5 how I analysed my data.

4.4.3 Ethics

Following Heriot-Watt University School of Social Sciences’ ethics procedure, I submitted a proposal for my research methodology and received full approval on the 26 January 2016. Once participants had looked at the recruitment material I posted online and in emails, they could click to an online portal where they could find out more about my research. This gave further details before they had to submit any demographic details into the online survey (hosted by Bristol Online Surveys, Heriot-Watt University’s preferred survey tool). Once this information was collected I was able to ensure that the SLI was eligible to take part, for example that they were a fully registered SLI, and then contact them directly with consent forms and guidelines.

The consent form can be seen in Appendix 1. I took into account the possibility that a SLI may want to withdraw from the research even after signing the consent form and assured them that this would be respected. It also committed to their anonymity in any publications. SLIs are committed themselves to keeping their clients anonymous and therefore I needed to respect this professional obligation. Due to the small numbers of SLIs or deaf signers in any given geographical area, distinguishing features like a disability, a medical condition, or a job title, could identify them (Young and Temple 2014). I have therefore chosen not to include all of the reflective journals or the full transcripts of the debrief interviews in an appendix to this thesis, because if they are read as a whole, individuals who work with the same deaf people, or members of the community in a given area may be able to identify an interpreter or a deaf individual, as a result of collecting contextual clues over a series of narratives. I have also been very careful not to give names of institutions that employ deaf people, or in some cases define the work that they do because there is the potential for there to be only one deaf professional in a given field and that could expose them.

After the first reflective journal was submitted to me by email by a participant, I spoke to them on the phone to discuss any concerns they had, any queries they wanted to clarify and to ensure that they were comfortable with me and the process. This gave them an opportunity to withdraw, though this never occurred in reality. They were also invited to a debrief interview after the final journal was submitted and this was an opportunity to ask them how they experienced the research process. Each of the participants described their experiences of taking part and at no time was I concerned that they had had any adverse reactions to reflecting on their assignments which required any support or other type of intervention. These two ‘checkpoints’ were valuable steps in the process of collecting data for these reasons alongside others.

Harris, Holmes and Mertens (2009), in their article *Research Ethics in Sign Language Communities*, promote a transformative research paradigm which has a goal of social transformation. In this paradigm they describe the role of the researcher “as one who works in partnership with others for social change and thereby challenges the *status quo*” (Harris, Holmes and Mertens 2009, p.108). I value this perspective on research ethics despite the fact that I am not working directly with sign language communities (to use Harris, Holmes and Mertens’ terminology). The fact that my research could have an impact on sign language communities requires me to consider my ethical stance towards these communities. My ethical stance includes many of the values of a transformative research ethics paradigm, which they list in a table entitled *Basic Beliefs of the Transformative Paradigm* (see Harris, Holmes and Mertens 2009, p.109). They list axiological, ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoints for this paradigm. From an axiological perspective I am in accord with them as I value the promotion of social justice. They propose that privilege and its capacity to structure perceptions of reality impact ontological stance, something I recognise. Crucially, my epistemological stance follows the transformative approach because I recognise the interactive nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participants as well as explicitly acknowledging power and privilege. Finally, as I hope this chapter will reveal, I have chosen qualitative methods in order to validate the knowledge of the participants, allowing their voices to be heard. The method that I chose to collect the stories of SLIs was through reflective journals and interviews. In the next section I turn to a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of reflective journals as a data collection method.

4.4.4 Reflective Journals and Interviews

For the main data collection method, I identified the solicited reflective journal as the key vehicle for gathering SLIs' perceptions of power dynamics in interpreted events. Reflective diaries fit well with this research because observing the activity of interpreting does not allow the researcher to understand the thought processes of the SLIs or the decisions she makes. However, asking SLIs to reflect on their perceptions of events and their part in them has the potential to reveal their motivations. One aim of the solicited diary can be to "provide access to a more in-depth understanding of people's interpretations of their worlds" (Bartlett and Milligan 2015, p.15). This approach fit my research methodology well and as it had been employed as a method in Dickinson's (2010) research with SLIs in the workplace I knew a successful precedent had been set. This method has also been used by Napier and Rohan (2007) to look at deaf people's perceptions of the interpreters that they worked with over a six-week period.

Diary research, though perhaps a less well-known qualitative research method, is being utilized more and more by researchers: Bartlett and Milligan (2015) discovered 4800 papers which employed this method in the period 1990- 2015. The rationale for using event-contingent solicited diaries in my research is that they offer not a single snapshot of an event but, in repeating the reflection over several events, the opportunity to see patterns. This method also has the potential to be immediate rather than retrospective because SLIs could write these on the day or shortly afterwards. The reflective journal gives the participant opportunities to consider different events as they occur and not to retrospectively summarise them all in one interview, which has huge benefits for the researcher because they do not know what trigger questions will prompt relevant recollections. This method also creates opportunities to obtain information about events which the researcher cannot attend: whether that is interpreted community events or 'inside the mind' of the SLI. In an interview a SLI may refer to the most recent thing that occurred to them or a summary of events, diaries can counteract this weighting of events (Stone, Shiffman, Schwartz, Broderick and Hufford 2002). By combining the solicited diary with an end-of-study interview there is the potential to gather richer data (Alaszewski 2006; Corti 1993). The SLIs may become more sensitive to power as they write and reflect on it, they may therefore reveal deeper reflections over time. This method can counteract self-censorship because of the intimate nature of writing a diary with no observing-other present in the moment (Bartlett and Milligan 2015). By removing the contrived nature of the interview setting there is also more opportunity for the gathering of more "naturalistic data" because "[t]he distance between researcher and

researched can also result in diarists feeling less ‘judged’ by their responses or less pressured into giving what they feel (rightly or wrongly) is the ‘right’ answer” (Bartlett and Milligan 2015, p.15). The method has benefits for participants because it can offer more equitable involvement in research: participants have more control over the collection of the data, when they are going to contribute, where they produce their entries, how much detail they provide and how they represent themselves (ibid 2015). It may also be that some participants agree to take part who would not normally be attracted because of the method and control that they have.

Using a combination of methods in qualitative research can be valuable for improving rigour and depth according to Bartlett and Milligan (2015), and commonly an interview is combined with the diary method (Alaszewski 2006). Consequently, I included debrief interviews with participants. Having read their entries before speaking with them I could focus on specific events and ask detailed questions about their responses and feelings. I was also able to ask them how they had experienced the journaling exercise and with most participants I also asked them what their ideal power dynamic would look like.

Therapeutic benefits for the SLIs participating in this research were also an appealing aspect and were born out in the feedback I received. The opportunity to unburden themselves of difficult or challenging power dynamics that arose was taken. This meant that there were professional benefits and personal benefits for the participants. Bartlett and Milligan report “numerous examples of professionals learning from the diary-writing experience” (2015, p.76). To conclude, this approach offered many positive benefits to the participants and could even be used for a submission to their registration body for continuing professional development, a requirement which they have to meet each year.

4.4.5 Piloting the Reflective Journal

I piloted the reflective journal with two SLIs that I approached because I had a professional connection with them. The first response that I received gave cause for concern. The SLI who had begun the reflective journals was unable to submit them to me because they felt that the confidentiality would be lost. This was in part due to the fact that they were a designated interpreter¹⁰ and because I knew them I would know the deaf client that they were talking about. The interpreter felt a responsibility to the client

¹⁰ A designated interpreter is an interpreter who regularly works for the same person in a workplace rather than with a variety of clients.

they worked for and wanted to maintain the relationship that they had with them. I therefore had to take into consideration that this type of research might not be accessible for SLIs working in these types of positions and indeed, none of the participants had these types of jobs. The other SLI that I approached to try out this method gave feedback on the instructions, which I was able to then adapt, according to how she had and had not understood them. We also discussed the idea that after one reflection I should ask the SLI to email it to me and then phone them to discuss their experience, giving them the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The SLI thought that this would be very helpful and ensure more confidence in the process and in me as a researcher. I built this into the protocol. Finally, we also discussed the idea of submitting each diary entry as it was written, for several reasons: to keep track of the progress, to avoid editing of old reflections in light of newer reflections and as a way of staying engaged in the process.

I then asked a third SLI to take part in the pilot because of the difficulty with the first candidate's experience. This SLI focussed their first reflection on a co-working power dynamic with another interpreter. This was not my focus and so we discussed this. This led to me refining the wording on my instructions. It also led me to develop a template rather than giving only guiding questions as the SLI felt that it was too vague. I had resisted this because I did not want to influence the structure too much, however, having heard all three pilot participants mention the 'vagueness' of the task I felt I needed to follow up on this. The guidelines and template can be found in appendix 2, and the participants were provided with the template but were told that they were not obliged to use it. In my research diary I wrote:

I have adapted the guidelines to include these elements [the inclusion of a template], including a chat after the first entry, and a debrief interview. These decisions stemmed from [one participant's] data and feedback as well [as the other's]. I have also tried to encourage freer flowing writing as many seem quite rigid and seem to justify themselves – the medium makes this necessary I suppose. (My diary, 25 May 2016)

This entry shows that I was adapting the protocols and guidelines in response to the SLIs who had piloted the reflective journal. I had not initially included the debrief interview information in the research guidelines and therefore needed to include it before launching the recruitment drive.

4.4.6 Recruitment and Diary Process

Using network sampling (Hale and Napier 2013), I recruited participants for this study by creating an advert that could be emailed or posted online through professional networks (the Association of Sign Language Interpreters, the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters, Visual Language Professionals) social networks (Facebook) and professional list serves (e-newsli) (see Appendix 3 for the recruitment flier). As well as the advert I posted a YouTube video of myself explaining the study so that potential participants could see me and hear about the research (this received 150 views in the first month). This approach garnered interest and I had thirteen people who registered their interest through the online demographic survey (see Appendix 4) that I created. This survey was linked to the advert, once the link was clicked on there was a detailed explanation of the study and I asked initial questions about the status of the SLI, their name and contact details as well as other data of interest. This took approximately ten minutes. Once they had completed it I was able to email them directly with the full explanation of the study, a consent form and the reflective journal instructions and template. Of the thirteen who registered interest, ten took part and completed either four, five or six journal entries each. The goal was for them to complete five entries each as this seemed like a realistic and achievable number of entries to request from participants. I initially considered asking them to submit an undetermined number of entries within a strict timeline. However, due to the nature of the freelance work, the summer holidays starting at the beginning of the recruitment phase and the conclusion that having a definite number of entries to aim for would be more motivating, I opted for this approach.

Following the submission of their consent form, I asked them to fill in one reflection and submit it to me. I then arranged a phone call with them to discuss the format and see whether they had been able to follow the instructions and remain focussed on the aim. I did not discuss the content of their reflection and whether it was in line with my goals (i.e. they were discussing an aspect of power dynamics). I only encouraged their continuation and clarified any queries they had or concerns they wished to raise and tried to establish a rapport with them so that they felt they could trust me. I therefore did not judge or assess their entries. With two participants I had to redirect them to write about the power dynamics between them and their clients rather than between them and their co-worker interpreters.

Following recruitment in this way I regularly followed up using email (chiefly), but also texts on a monthly basis. During the summer months, I emailed all the participants with information and included a video, which they could watch online, of

myself explaining that they did not need to worry about not completing entries as there was time to complete in the Autumn (this received eight views). The reflective journals and debriefs were completed by February 2017. As soon as an SLI finished their five reflections I contacted them to arrange a debrief interview.

The ten debrief interviews were conducted using Skype, a video phone technology, and recorded using QuickTime to audio record and/or screen record the entire interview. I used Skype to phone two SLIs recording the audio only (because two participants did not have this technology available to them) and for the other eight we had a video call. I reminded the SLIs when organising the debrief that I would record it with their permission and at the beginning of the debrief I asked them again before pressing the record button. The debriefs lasted between 20 and 55 minutes with the average length being 45 minutes. These interviews were not structured because they were a response to the reflections that the individual SLIs had submitted. I prepared in advance of each one by reading through the reflections carefully and making notes about any clarifications needed and any interesting or striking issues. I began each interview asking the SLI what their experience of writing the reflective journals had been like. This question was intended to ensure that they were the focus of the interview, to break the ice and to offer a way into discussing the themes that had come up. Often this initial question brought up issues that we could then explore together, without me necessarily suggesting a topic of conversation based on my notes. The SLIs often added further stories that had occurred after particular reflections or gave more context as well. I offered my own understandings of their reflections couching them in terms of “tell me if you disagree” to probe concepts. I also asked almost all of the SLIs what their ideal power dynamic would be, usually at the end of the interview. The interviews were a collaboration of ideas as well as a different method for investigating the SLIs’ perceptions. In terms of validity and reliability, I can confirm that the ten SLIs had written their own reflections because they cross-referenced them throughout the debriefs without hesitation. Unfortunately, one Skype debrief did not record the audio and I lost that data. I did not check the recording immediately afterward and therefore did not make extensive notes of the conversation either.

4.4.7 Participants

The participants comprised ten registered SLIs from across the UK. They were registered either with the National Registers of Communication Professionals with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) or Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters

(SASLI). None of the participants had BSL as a first language as all of them had learned it later in life, though one participant had a family member who was deaf. We cannot infer from this that second language learners are more reflective or more concerned with power dynamics than native users of BSL because the sample is too small, however it raises interesting questions for future research.

Nine of the participants had gained a university qualification at some point in their training (see 1.1 for a description of routes to qualification). Table 1 shows demographic information about the participants. There were nine female interpreters and one male who took part. I decided to give all the SLIs a pseudonym that was a unisex name so as not to single out the male interpreter because this might make him more identifiable in his reflections. Throughout this thesis I am referring to all the participants with a female pronoun, this decision was made solely for the purposes of ensuring anonymity.

Name	Age range	Years of experience	Level of Interpreting Qualification	Work environments
Alex	30-49	6-10	Postgrad diploma	Medical, Educational, Employment
Bailey	30-49	6-10	Masters degree	Medical, Training
Corey	30-49	11-20	Postgrad certificate	Community
Darcy	30-49	0-5	Undergraduate degree +NVQ6	Education, Video Relay, Employment
Eli	50-59	21-30	Postgrad diploma	Health and Social Care
Francis	30-49	11-20	Postgrad diploma	Health and Social Care
Jamie	50-59	11-20	Postgrad diploma	Community and Employment
Kendall	30-49	11-20	Postgrad diploma	Medical, Employment, Video Relay, Social Services
Morgan	50-59	11-20	Postgrad diploma	Community, some Platform
Taylor	50-59	21-30	NVQ	Community, Social Care

Table 1: Demographics of participants

The range of environments that the SLIs worked in were very similar. Although I did not clarify ‘community’ interpreting this is generally understood to mean medical and social care/services work, work-related meetings, school meetings, some police work and events (Hale 2007). Some people had work that was employment related but it would appear that none of these people did solely designated interpreter¹¹ work. Court interpreting did not appear in the lists that they gave.

I have not provided geographical locations of participants against their demographic information in order to guard against identification. However, figure 2 provides a graphic representation of the geographical spread of participants. I have not included where more than one interpreter came from the same area hence why there are only seven counties identified and ten participants, again this is to avoid identification of the SLIs.



Figure 3: Geographical spread of SLIs

As can be seen from figure 2 there was a considerable geographical spread of SLIs. This confirms that the approach I took for recruitment reached a diverse number of locations.

Table 2 shows the types of continuing professional development that the SLIs were involved in.

Alex	Supervisory group meetings Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work
Bailey	Supervisory group meetings Supervisory relationship with a colleague/manager

¹¹ Designated interpreters are those interpreters that work solely for one client in a place of work.

	<p>Attending lectures pertinent to my work</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p>
Corey	<p>Supervisory group meetings</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p>
Darcy	<p>Supervisory group meetings</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p>
Eli	<p>Professional mentor/mentee relationship</p> <p>Supervisory relationship with a colleague/manager</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p> <p>Other – Workplace training</p>
Francis	<p>Supervisory group meetings</p> <p>Professional mentor/mentee relationship</p> <p>Supervisory relationship with a colleague/manager</p> <p>Attending lectures pertinent to my work</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p> <p>Other - Reading academic and other papers, Informal education, in conversation with clients/patients both Deaf and hearing</p>
Jamie	<p>Supervisory group meetings</p> <p>Supervisory relationship with a colleague/manager</p> <p>Attending lectures pertinent to my work</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p>
Kendal	<p>Supervisory relationship with a colleague/manager</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p>
Morgan	<p>Supervisory group meetings</p> <p>Supervisory relationship with a colleague/manager</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p> <p>Other – conferencing and network events</p>
Taylor	<p>Supervisory group meetings</p> <p>Attending lectures pertinent to my work</p> <p>Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work</p>

Table 2 Continuing Professional Development activities

From Table 2 it is evident that these SLIs were committed to continuing professional development (CPD) and undertook several activities that supported reflective practice. All NRCPD registered SLIs must complete 24 hours of CPD a year (12 hours of which must be structured). Structured supervisory meetings are one way of achieving this as well as attending trainings. It is significant that all of these SLIs are in a supervisory relationship either with a qualified supervisor, colleague, manager or professional peer group. Supervision could be a reflective conversation about the dynamics an interpreted interaction, dilemmas that occur or stress that has arisen (ASLI 2018). This is not a requirement of CPD; it is one option, and supervision with a qualified supervisor can be costly for freelance interpreters. It is interesting that SLIs who are already engaged in reflective practice like supervisions are willing to take part in this study.

4.4.8 Data Processing and Analysis

Once the reflections were collected in one place I began to process them. At first, I digitised any reflections that were hand written. I then redacted identifying features either of the SLIs or the clients or companies and organisations that they worked for. The British deaf signing community is small therefore it was important to take out information that might identify a client, which included medical diagnoses and geographical regions. I then imported the reflections into Nvivo¹² qualitative data analysis software. From the ten SLIs taking part in the study there were 49 entries, though two were not used because they focussed on power dynamics with a co-worker, leaving 47 for analysis.

With regard to the debrief interviews, as mentioned before, one interview did not record the audio for unknown reasons. However, the other nine interviews were kept for transcription. Once the initial and secondary analysis of the reflective journals was completed (see sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4) and the focus of the analysis was clearer, I completed selective transcriptions of the interviews. This may seem contradictory to the aims of narrative analysis, which focus on whole texts being available. However, having analysed the 47 entries in great detail and having spent considerable time reflecting on the themes that had arisen from them I felt that I could listen to the interviews carefully enough to extract the excerpts, often lengthy, to transcribe. I chose to analyse while transcribing the debriefs because I had built up a body of analytical insights to apply to them (Davidson 2009). I also paraphrased interactions that I chose not to transcribe for

¹² For more information on NVivo see <http://www.qsrinternational.com/what-is-nvivo> – NVivo is software that supports qualitative research and aids in organization and analysis of unstructured, or qualitative data.

reference during further analysis; these became useful at later stages if I decided to re-listen to the debriefs for further clarifications. Some of these un-transcribed sections included off-topic discussions or stories that related to events that were not pertinent to my research. The transcription conventions are laid out below.

4.4.9 Transcription Conventions

The reflective journals had a data capture element built into them as described above. The only conventions that I have used in these journals therefore are square brackets to fill in redacted material like a name of an organisation. On rare occasions, I have redacted paragraphs and written [redacted material] to encode this. I have also added words in square brackets [] where it makes the reading easier (perhaps the sentence was not grammatical in the original) or clarifies who is being referred to.

For transcribing the videoed interviews I used a free online package called otranscribe, which allows for importing of a video or audio file and simple functions that make repeating sections of audio with overlap, stopping, inserting a time signature and transcription straightforward. Where audio was occasionally unclear I was able to insert a time signature for future reference.

Since transcription is never a neutral process (Arksey and Knight 1999; Riessman 2008) it seems pertinent to be transparent about the conventions I chose to follow when transcribing the interview videos that I recorded. Transcriptions inevitably represent what I think is relevant and interesting in the data (Metzger 1999). Rather than transcribe every verbal tic and hesitation, I made the decision to ignore these aspects of the conversation which broke the flow of the story being told because I wanted to get to “the ideas, logic, beliefs and understandings” (Arksey and Knight 1999, p.147) rather than any discourse features. I therefore did not encode overlapping interactions and pauses in the transcriptions, neither did I include hesitations such as ‘um’ or ‘er’. Furthermore, and importantly for narrative inquiry, I did not want the participants in my study to seem inarticulate as a result of a verbatim approach to the transcription process. As Poland points out:

The potential for respondents (or classes of respondents) to be made to appear inarticulate as a result of the liberal use of verbatim quotes in the published results of a study has important ethical implications. In addition, verbatim quotes often make for difficult reading. The impact of quotes from respondents can often be

greater if the researcher subjects them to a little skillful editing, without substantially altering the gist of what was said. (Poland 2003, p.272)

As many of the excerpts that I have incorporated into the following chapters are lengthy and readability was important, I therefore chose to utilise normal writing conventions as much as possible (Wadensjö 1998). As many SLIs recounted the words and meanings of clients or the reactions of others I used quotation marks to show that they are reporting speech, rather than that they themselves are saying them to me, a challenge identified by Poland (2003, p.270). What is lost in the transcriptions from video to text are tones of voice (joking, irony etc..) and, more importantly perhaps for SLIs, body language and gesture and sometimes simultaneous signing. I therefore encoded gesture or BSL, where it improved comprehensibility, by square-bracketing the meaning of the gesture or sign. When a participant emphasised a word, I have capitalised that word within the sentence to show its import.

4.5 Data Analysis

Having already described my methodological approach as within the field of narrative inquiry I will not spend any more time describing that analytical perspective. However, I would like to explain that I used a hybrid analytical approach in the initial stages of the data analysis. Drawing from the frameworks of thematic narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis I initiated an iterative process in order to answer my research questions effectively. I began by focusing on the language that the SLIs used to describe power dynamics. This involved using critical discourse analysis (CDA) and is discussed in section 4.5.1. The second iteration of analysis focused on the techniques of power that SLIs described using in situations where power dynamics were noticed, this is discussed in 4.5.2. The third iteration of analysis examined the rationales of the SLIs with regard to the actions they described taking, covered in 4.5.3. Finally, in 4.5.4, I hone in on the use of the Freirean framework of oppressor and partnering traits to analyse the reflections and debrief interviews.

4.5.1 First Analysis of Narratives – Language, Metaphor, Role-Construction

The ideology, buried, or somewhat concealed, in the text will become clear. It is this process of revealing the discourses embedded in texts that is seen as one

important step in bringing ideological positions out into the open so that they can be more easily challenged. (Machin 2012, p.207)

Machin is discussing the tool of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is most often used only for a small number of texts and focuses on various features within each text. As I mentioned in section 4.4.2 above, elements of discourse analysis can sit comfortably within a narrative analysis (Chase 2011; Wells 2011). I had 47 reflections to analyse and nine debriefs and knew from the outset that a detailed discourse analysis of all of them would not be possible in the timeframe of producing this thesis. However, I was attracted to the proposition that CDA can uncover how social discourses maintain the *status quo* or disrupt it (Bloor and Bloor 2007; Fairclough 2001). Fairclough (2001), one of the main proponents of CDA, describes the value of understanding implicit assumptions that create a mutual foundation for communication and a sense of solidarity within established groups or communities. These same implicit assumptions can also be the source of hegemonic, social dominance and power. Furthermore, Foucauldian discourse analysis, a subset of CDA, aims to “explore how specific discourses reproduce or transform relations of power as well as relations of meaning” (Mottier 2008, p.189). This aspect of CDA presented the opportunity to look closely at the ways in which SLIs wrote or talked about their profession and their professional behaviour to discover whether there were implicit assumptions evident in the words they chose to use. Of particular interest to me are the value assumptions that SLIs make about their role and responsibilities and the power that they perceive themselves to hold. However, I am also interested in the unconscious revelations held within their texts. Fairclough incorporates the work of Bourdieu (1977, p.79) when he says:

In the words of Pierre Bourdieu, “it is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know”. This *opacity* of discourse (and practice in general) indicates why it is of so much more social importance than it may on the face of it seem to be: because in discourse people can be legitimizing (or delegitimizing) particular power relations without being conscious of doing so. (Fairclough 2001, p.33)

In response to the first research sub-question *what language do SLIs use when they are narrating stories about power dynamics?* I focused my attention on how SLIs constructed their professional role, the use of metaphors linked to power and also on their use of

pronominals when referring to clients. I will take these in turn and describe the logic behind these decisions.

Firstly, I am interested in the SLIs' conceptualisations of agency within their role and this led me to want to examine how they described their roles. This element of the analysis essentially required me to mark sections of narrative where the participants talked or wrote about what they do, how they do it and how they refer to it. I focused on words like 'conduit', 'active participant', 'cultural mediation' and other references to the different models of interpreting (see section 3.4.1). This was not a content analysis though and required carefully reading the entirety of the narratives.

Secondly, Foucauldian discourse analysis positions metaphors as "constitutive of the social and political world" (Mottier 2008, p.189). I therefore wanted to explore metaphors used to talk about power as I saw these as a key to understanding their conception of the nature of power. Mottier refers to metaphors as 'mini-narratives' that can construct identities and also delimit them (ibid 2008, p.192), which appeared to offer an analytical tool for discovering the discourse within the narrative and for developing a picture of how the SLIs perceived themselves and their clients. I analysed the reflections noting each time the SLIs used a metaphor linked to power. Nvivo was useful for conducting initial word searches for 'power', 'disempower', 'empower' and the surrounding phrases that accompanied them. An example of the type of search I did is shown in figure 3.

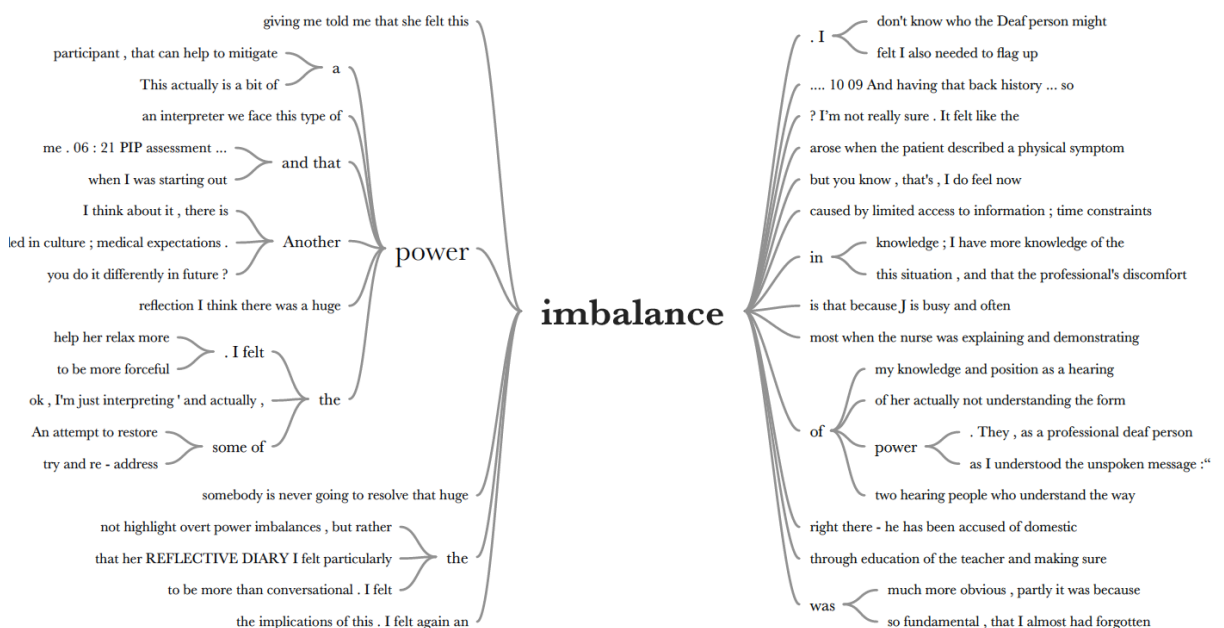


Figure 4: Nvivo word tree ‘power imbalance’

This allowed me to find metaphors easily and compare use of metaphors. The analysis of this can be found in sections 5.2.2 to 5.2.5.

Lastly, I used a similar approach to search for uses of the pronoun ‘my’ in relation to clients to ascertain whether, as I suspected from an initial read-through of the reflections, the pronoun ‘my’ was only used in reference to the deaf client and not the hearing client. The analysis of this is considered under the Freirean analysis in section 6.3.1 as it dovetailed well with other findings.

4.5.2 Second Analysis of Narratives – Techniques of Power

In my second cycle of analysis, in response to my second research sub question: *what actions and techniques do SLIs describe when they attempt to make an impact on power dynamics?* I focussed on the agency of the SLIs. I drew on a process of analysis described by Riessman (2008) to analyse the reflections. I began a ‘surface reading’ of the narratives by looking for references to actions-taken. I therefore read the narratives noting where the SLIs used verbs to describe actions they had taken as a result of a power dynamic. These verbs were symbols of agency by the SLI. These I refer to as ‘techniques of power’ (see section 5.3). The identification of these verbs allowed me to read the texts more holistically attending to agency and the positioning that the SLIs were writing or speaking about. Sometimes this led to a passive voice being used, obscuring agency entirely. Having analysed the narratives in this way I became interested in how the SLIs then rationalised or justified the actions they had taken and read the reflections again for ‘rationales of power’ (see section 6.2).

4.5.3 Third Analysis of Narratives – Rationales

In order to answer the sub-question *how do SLIs conceptualise their professional responsibilities in relation to power dynamics?* I explored the reflections for assumptions about professional responsibilities. Fairclough finds rationalisations in discourses revealing. He states:

We can see rationalizations as part and parcel of naturalization: together with the generation of common-sense discourse practices comes the generation of common-

sense rationalization of such practices, which served to *legitimize* them. (Fairclough 2001, p.77, *italics in original*)

These legitimizing discourses allow the authors to feel justified in their reasoning. Consequently, I wanted to examine the ‘common-sense’ rationales that SLIs gave for their practice. This meant reading and re-reading reflections for sometimes self-conscious statements about responsibilities and at other times for unconscious expressions that presented clues about their underlying assumptions.

4.5.4 Fourth Analysis of Narratives –Applying a Freirean Framework

Throughout all the stages of the analysis process Freire’s work on oppressor traits and partnering traits resonated with what I was reading. The SLIs demonstrated conflicting expressions of their role and responsibilities throughout their reflections. This sometimes confusing and disorderly aspect of the analysis was disorienting. It was difficult to find an individual who was consistently displaying partnering traits or oppressor traits. The identification of these traits became part of my analysis and allowed for the complexity and dissonance that I was reading in the narratives. Ultimately this generated the final research sub-question: *what traits are revealed through the stories SLIs tell about power dynamics in their practice?* The overlaying of theory onto stories may appear to contradict the spirit of narrative inquiry which prioritizes the voice of the individual; however, as Riessman writes, “[m]aterial from other sources enlivens an emerging theme and complicates it” (Riessman, 2008, p.67). Similarly, Silverman claims “[t]heory provides a framework for critically understanding phenomena and a basis for considering how what is unknown might be organised” (Silverman 2014, p.56). What originally appeared to complicate the analysis, the idea of binary identities of either oppressor or partner, developed into a more nuanced and realistic spectrum of behaviours that could be articulated simultaneously. This aspect of the analysis is discussed in section 6.3.

It is worth noting that because of the iterative process of the analysis, several of the reflections are analysed multiple times in the next two chapters. This is because I was analysing them with different lenses.

4.6 Methods and Methodology - An epilogue

Having described the approach that I took to my study, and having explained the rationale for doing this, I come to the last section of the chapter. I will describe some

exigencies that had to be attended to during the process of data collection and analysis, followed by some limitations of the study.

4.6.1 Exigencies

At the start of the data collection exercise I was unsure about how to debrief participants after they had completed the reflections. I wanted to keep the interviews unstructured, leaving room for clarifications and further comments about their reflections and more specific questions about how they saw their role and responsibilities in relation to power, and so I navigated each interview differently. One SLI, Bailey, finished her reflections in a very short time and she was the first to be debriefed. What was curious and unexpected to me was that Bailey was defensive from start to finish. When I was conducting the interview, I was aware of a tension but did not manage to ease this during the interview. Bailey frequently expressed that the reflective journal exercise did not have an impact on her, as though this was something I had intended. When I asked how the experience of writing reflections was for her, she replied:

Well, the truth is, if you want me to be really truthful, the truth is it hasn't really had a big impact on my life. At the time when I was doing it I thought 'Oh this is interesting doing a bit of reflection, this is good for me' but, I was just re-reading something I had written in one of the [reflections] so I was saying, 'maybe I should talk to my client about the interpreting process', of course I haven't. (Bailey, debrief, 4:03)

Interestingly, this continued throughout the interview but in a conflicted manner. Even though we talked about many topics and homed in on particular reflections she said, "[that] was regardless of whether I had to write something up though. I mean the reason I wrote that one was because it was so powerful. But it was also good to write it down though also" or "[j]ust one thing, I personally, don't feel that in that number of reflective journals I really got to the bottom of power" and "I don't think I can truthfully say, hand-on-heart, I'm more aware of power because I've done reflective journals...". It appeared that Bailey was worried about either my judgement of her reflections, or she was opposed to the idea of reflective journals more generally for reasons I was not privy to. It may also be the case that her expectations for taking part in this research did not match my intentions. This had an impact on me as I prepared for the other debrief interviews because I wanted to establish rapport in the first moments of the skype call to make sure

that the participants did not feel threatened by my research. There were no more instances like this with other participants. Whether it was due to a change in my approach to the interview or not I cannot say. This made me aware of the importance of rapport between researcher and participants. It also reminded me that the nature of research relies on the willingness of participants to share their stories, which have the potential to make them vulnerable and, consequently, they may feel the need to protect themselves from perceived judgments.

4.6.2 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the methods and methodology because no research that is undertaken is infallible. I have been clear from the outset that I can only tell my story of the reflections and interviews that I have been fortunate to have been given by the participants. This throws up limitations immediately. Only SLIs who warm to this method of research participation will be interested in agreeing to participate. This can be said of any research method, but it does imply, in this case, a commitment to reflective practice over a period of months. This method, therefore, would not appeal to SLIs who are either less reflective generally and those who do not have the time to commit to this extra-curricular activity.

Relying on the SLIs to choose situations that prompt them to write about power dynamics reveals what they think are important power dynamics, but the researcher cannot see what situations they do *not* consider to be significant or notable. It would have been possible to ask SLIs to write about all their work in one week (for example) with a lens on power dynamics instead. This would have then revealed the types of work that they did not consider to be eventful in terms of power dynamics. However, there was a danger that this type of study would be too time-intensive and deter SLIs from completing. I chose therefore to allow them to self-select the instances, however I emphasized that they could choose dynamics that they considered good, difficult or neutral.

I relied on the participants' self-motivation to complete the data collection phase, and this proved challenging. I regularly emailed or texted the participants to encourage them to keep writing and though some finished their five entries within a month to six weeks many took over six months to complete. This was due to holidays, the lack of assignments that struck them as notable in terms of power dynamics, and also lack of time or inclination to write about them.

The intention of collecting reflections was that they would be current reflections of work done within several days of the reflection being written. One participant chose to write about several reflections of past work that had taken place several months prior to the reflection. The problem arising from this is that recollection of the events could be skewed by the time lapse and they could be more generalized. The participant wrote two reflections of this nature that had clearly impacted on her and remained with her to some degree because of the nature of the power dynamics that had occurred. I took the decision to keep them within the data set under analysis not only because they offered rich descriptions of a perspective of power dynamics but also to honour the collaboration of the participant. Telling a story is always a reconstruction of events, whether there is a great deal of time since the events occurred or not. The events had clearly had a profound impact on this participant and offered rich insight into a complex situation. My focus on the story-telling and language elements of the reflections meant that accuracy was less important.

The length of the reflections varied greatly. I offered a template (see Appendix 2), which took up one page of A4 but was careful to say that it was a flexible template and they should use whatever method they preferred. Many participants used this template and many times people went over this suggested limit. However, others wrote brief paragraphs under each heading, depending on their preference and the nature of the work. This cannot be regulated using this method, which is not a serious limitation but should be taken into account.

Another limitation that has already been highlighted in 4.3.3, is that I am unable to include the full text of all the reflections and debrief interviews in an appendix because it has the potential to make the participants or their clients identifiable. Even though I have anonymised geographical references, names, identifying characteristics or institutions a collection of reflections by one interpreter could be recognisable to fellow interpreters in that region. This would then break the confidentiality agreement that I made at the outset of this research. This potentially weakens the thesis because the data cannot be verified, and the patterns that I have found within the data cannot be drawn out by others. This has an impact on the reliability of the research. However, I hope that in giving extensive excerpts from the data throughout the results chapters, readers will be able to engage enough with the reflections and debrief transcripts to feel that the analysis and interpretations are credible.

Finally, some reflections by SLIs were shorter than others, in particular Taylor wrote five very short reflections. Therefore, there was a lot less language and story-

telling to analyse. Debrief interviews were useful for gaining more insight into the conceptualisations of SLIs who were less prolific on paper.

Another limitation with a sample size of only ten participants, is that any generalisations to the entire professional community are not possible. However, this was not my intention at the outset of this study because of my desire to do qualitative research rather than quantitative.

Finally, in this section on limitations, it would be remiss of me not to highlight that as the interpreter of the reflections and stories I am limited in offering only the interpretations that I see. In the proceeding chapters of analysis (chapter 5 and chapter 6), I offer interpretations of the data. There is the potential for multiple readings of the data, some of which I am unable to see because of my own positioning and background. What I offer is not an objective understanding or any kind of ‘truth’, but a construction of my own which supports the arguments that I am making. I take a position and have an agenda in my thesis, therefore my readings are generative of power dynamics themselves and I may be complicit in maintaining discourses of power which marginalise and oppress. It is not my intention to do this, however I aim to be transparent about the process and am aware that I am a product of the discourses that surround me and influence my perspectives.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed my positionality as a researcher, followed by a detailed description of the methodology that I chose for conducting this research. I went on to explain the methods I selected and the recruitment process. Having set the scene for the data collection exercise I went on to present a profile of the participants in this study. I then discussed the analytical tools that I used for interpreting the data. Finally, I elucidated the limitations of this study. In the next chapter I will begin to present the results and their interpretation focusing on the first two research sub-questions.

Chapter 5: Language and Techniques of Power

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter and the subsequent one is to present the results from the qualitative data gathered in both the reflective journals and debrief interviews described in chapter 4. By way of structuring this chapter and chapter 6, I intend to respond to my research questions in turn. The research objectives I set out are as follows, starting with the overarching question:

How do SLIs conceptualise power dynamics within their professional practice?

Each of my sub-questions will be answered in the following structure:

Chapter 5

What language do SLIs use when they are narrating stories about power dynamics?

What actions and techniques do SLIs describe when they attempt to make an impact on power dynamics?

Chapter 6

What rationales do SLIs offer for their actions and techniques?

What traits are revealed through the use of language in SLIs' narratives about power dynamics?

Beginning with an introductory section *Setting the Scene* (5.1.2) which describes what the data set reveals more generally, I will follow on with sections entitled *The Language of Power* (5.2) and *The Techniques of Power* (5.3), addressing the first two sub-questions in turn.

5.1.1 *Setting the Scene*

The 47 reflections submitted by SLIs to this study came from various settings. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the contexts of the reflections. I categorised them depending on the domain of the assignment as described by the SLI. I then further categorised them in terms of which clients, hearing or deaf, were providing the professional service in that domain. For example, if the domain was 'health', I then

determined whether the doctor or nurse (the professional providing the service) was hearing or deaf.

Domain	Total number of reflections	Professional/s providing service is deaf	Professional/s providing service is hearing
Health	18	1	17
Social Work	9	0	9
Social Services	7	1	6
Training	4	1	3
Education	3	0	3
Conference	2	1	1
Employment	3	2	1
Police	3	0	3
Total	47	6	41

Table 3 Reflective journal domains

This initial categorising of the data set reveals that SLIs picked out these types of situations as ones where the power dynamic had been notable. We do not know what percentage of their work was in each of the settings and therefore cannot see whether in fact there is any correlation with the typical ratio of health appointments, for example, that they would normally do. However, these settings are consistent with the settings that these SLIs claim to work in, shown in table 1 in chapter 4. Additional to the demographic data collected from the online survey and detailed in chapter 4 table 1, is anecdotal evidence from the participants in debrief interviews which confirmed that SLIs Bailey, Francis and Kendall interpret for a majority of medical appointments.

In the vast majority of reflections, the deaf signing client is the service user rather than the professional providing the service. In only six instances do we see the deaf signing client as the professional or gatekeeper of a service. This is not a surprising finding because deaf signers, due to audist practices in society, face ongoing challenges fully accessing a language and education, which can put them at a disadvantage in the employment market. SLIs who take regular work with a deaf signer in their workplace (usually through access to work funding) might notice interesting power dynamics as well, however it appears that this study either did not attract the types of interpreters who take these assignments, or these types of assignments were rarely discussed due to the

potential for the deaf signers to be identified (as discussed in section 4.3.5), or for reasons I do not know about.

The next set of data that I present in the table 3 below shows the intersecting characteristics of the deaf signing clients. This analysis was prompted by reading through the reflections and seeing a common trope in which the SLIs described other characteristics of the deaf individuals they were working with, which they appeared to think were pertinent to the discussion of the power dynamic, or at least necessary for me to understand the situation clearly. What is most striking in the table below is the number of deaf signing clients who had intersecting characteristics that made them potentially more vulnerable to discrimination or oppressive practices (see section 2.3.6 for further discussion of intersecting characteristics). These characteristics do not necessarily mean that these deaf signers were *de facto* disadvantaged (in these reflections), however it is interesting to note the number of them and that the SLIs commented on them. In 24 reflections out of 47 the SLIs specifically mentioned additional factors that have the potential to place the deaf signers in even less powerful positions (see table 4).

Reflection	SLI's description of potential vulnerable characteristic of deaf client/service-user	Additional information indicating need for support
Alex, Entry 2	"deaf person with a learning disability"	A support worker attended with the client
Alex, Entry 5	"a Deaf person with additional needs"	A support worker in attendance with the client
Bailey, Entry 4	"older lady, who hasn't worked since the 90s" "pain and other medical issues"	
Corey, Entry 3	"Deafblind"	
Darcy, Entry 4	"Deaf student" "also had learning difficulties" "lack of background knowledge (that seemed to me in part because of poor education and language barriers in everyday life)"	
Darcy, Entry 5	The deaf advocate was there "because [the deaf client] was more vulnerable and needed support to understand the process."	Deaf advocate in attendance with the client
Eli, Entry 1	"diagnosis of cancer" "lonely and vulnerable man"	

Eli, Entry 2	“diagnosed with terminal cancer”	
Francis, Entry 1	“The patient, lacking much world-knowledge and having very low English literacy”	
Francis, Entry 2	“At a care home, where an elderly Deaf man resides”	“Client/patient’s PA” (personal assistant) attended as well
Francis, Entry 4	“He was someone with very low English literacy and limited world-knowledge”	
Francis, Entry 5	“young Deaf female needing an appointment concerning her mental health” “there was a suggestion that this was a person ‘in crisis’”	“a member of care staff from the residential school and college for Deaf people” attended with the client
Jamie, Entry 2	“he has specific communication needs, and his parents (both deaf) often act as relays.”	Mental Health setting, Deaf BSL-using Personal Assistant of the deaf client in attendance
Jamie, Entry 4	“Profoundly deaf client with Ushers ¹³ ” “sight loss”	
Jamie, Entry 5	<i>No description of why this person had a support worker</i>	Support worker in attendance
Kendall, Entry 2	“Patient is from [abroad] and has very limited access to written English”	
Kendall, Entry 4	“deafblind client”	
Kendall, Entry 5	“someone who does not have basic knowledge of the world”	
Morgan, Entry 1	“Deaf client” with a serious chronic health condition and a lifelong disability (neither of which can be disclosed for reasons of confidentiality) “unclear if has mild learning disability or educationally disadvantaged”	
Morgan, Entry 2	“Child in care”	
Morgan, Entry 3	“young deaf woman working towards independent living” “mild learning disabilities”	Sensory team support worker and deaf advocate attending with the client
Morgan, Entry 4 and 5	“is a [foreign national] woman” “has had no education and has no language (sign or	Deaf Interpreter attended in Entry 4,

¹³ Ushers refers to Usher Syndrome - a condition characterized by partial or total hearing loss and vision loss that worsens over time

	written [foreign country] or British/English)”	mental health and domestic abuse setting
Taylor, Entry 3	“The Deaf client is Muslim, female and wears a full Niqab/Burka”	

Table 4 Intersecting characteristics of deaf signers

In 24 of 47 reflections the SLIs mention a characteristic that had the potential to disadvantage the deaf signing client further. As evidenced in the section 2.4.3, the prevalence of deaf people with additional disabilities (physical and mental), language dysfluency and fund-of-information deficits is cited as being greater than in the hearing population, therefore there is a high probability that SLIs will work with deaf signers in community settings on a regular basis who have these types of additional characteristics. This seems to be mirrored in the set of reflections that I collected. It does not seem unreasonable to surmise that these intersecting characteristics could complicate a power dynamic when they are part of an interpreting assignment because any underlying oppressive dynamic has the potential to increase. It is worth noting (though unsurprising) that in all of the reflections in table 4 the deaf client with the intersecting characteristics was always a service-user and not a professional offering a service.

Conversely, there were only 4 descriptions of hearing clients whose intersecting characteristics had the potential to make them vulnerable:

Reflection	SLI’s description of potential vulnerable characteristic of hearing client/s	Additional information indicating need for support
Bailey, Entry 3	“two of the group had learning disabilities”	
Corey, Entry 2	“Hard of hearing woman” (not a BSL user but an English speaker)	
Darcy, Entry 2	“blind trainer”	A personal assistant was in attendance for the blind trainer
Jamie, Entry 3	Training event attended by hard of hearing people	

Table 5 Intersecting Characteristics of hearing clients

Of note in table 5 is that in three of these cases, the deaf client was the professional offering a service to hearing people who had an intersecting characteristic. Only the blind

trainer was a hearing person with an intersecting characteristic offering a service. I discuss the import of these observations in further detail in section 7.3.

5.1.2 Voices from the Field

Having set the scene for the participants and their reflections, I now want to describe the context for these next two chapters. Having analysed the stories of the participants in different ways I intend to describe the outcome of that analysis in my own words. I will weave the voices of SLIs in this study with my own to showcase the cumulative perspectives on power dynamics that have been produced through their reflections, the debrief interviews and my interpretations of these data. I hope to foreground the voices of the SLI participants throughout these two chapters.

As I write about the reflections of my participants, it will be important to bear in mind the following: the reflective journals are not personal diaries intended for the keeping of memories. SLIs have written reflections not just for themselves but for me the researcher. They are presenting themselves to show what they do, what they think and why they do it. Some of them used the template that I gave them or the set of questions I outlined to direct their focus, but they also chose stories that they wanted to tell and which they thought were interesting, challenging, unresolved or that they handled well. Francis, for example, chose to write about positive power dynamics in a specific reflection and was self-conscious about this in her feedback to me. On the other hand, Eli chose to write about two situations that had occurred a year previously that had had such an impact on her that she specifically asked if she could write about them. I am highlighting this to emphasize that each participant chose their own approach to this task and despite the template and suggested questions there was a diversity of reflections. I will endeavour to respect their reflections by giving enough context for them to be understood and follow narrative analysis conventions by quoting longer excerpts (Chase 2011). I will also employ an analytical approach to question the assumptions resting behind these reflections.

5.2 The Language of Power

To explore the question: *What language do SLIs use when they are narrating stories about power dynamics?* I read the reflections and debrief interviews analysing their use of language when discussing the models of interpreting and their concepts of power expressed through the use of metaphors. The process incorporated critical discourse analysis and narrative inquiry methods described in 4.4.1. In 5.2.1, I discuss

the SLIs' references to models of interpreting and their own power and agency within those models. In sections 5.2.2 to 5.2.5, I describe their references to metaphorical constructions of power.

5.2.1 A Discourse of Interpreting Models and Agency

Professional discourse in the signed language interpreting field is not an easy thing to analyse. SLIs often work alone and have not traditionally been encouraged to be in supervisory relationships. These reflections and debriefs allowed me to scrutinise the way in which they write about and discuss their conceptualisation of their roles and responsibilities. I decided therefore to focus on moments when they discussed their role in order to understand how they position themselves and whether there was any impact on their perception of their own power. I will take each participant in turn, focussing on times when they discussed their role in either their reflections or debrief interview.

Alex

During her postgraduate education Alex tells me that she “thought about the active participant rather than taking on the role of the, you know, ‘conduit’ (air quotes) if you like... you know... quite old fashioned probably now, but it still lingers.” (Alex, debrief 5:08). This active participant role is defined in opposition to the conduit model of interpreting. For Alex, the conduit model is a passive role, in which an SLI would not ‘act’ and by that Alex is referring to the example of explaining to a hearing client that the SLI is there for both clients, hearing and deaf, and not as the deaf person’s ‘helper’. Therefore, the active participation is the SLI directly describing the interpreter’s function to a client. This idea of the conduit model reflects the machine or conduit model referred to in 3.4.1. The active participant role reflects more recent research that views the interpreter as a coordinator of the action and seems to have been introduced in the postgraduate education. Shaffer discusses the ‘active role’ as a more current understanding of the role of interpreters and in opposition to the conduit model (see section 3.4.1). Alex describes feeling guilt in the early years of her interpreting practice which stems, she tells me, from trying to interpret everything perfectly but going away from assignments feeling “pulled in different directions” (debrief 10:43). Alex goes on to talk at length about the responsibility of working with a minority group of people:

I think it [the guilt] comes from the fact that we are quite often not seen as professionals due to the fact that we work with a minority group whose language

isn't recognised and whose language and culture aren't either recognised or respected. So I think it comes from trying to redress the power issues and of course we are never going to be able to do that. But I think what we do do, which is REALLY powerful, is to give that person LITERALLY a voice, and that, I think... whereas I used to strive to be perfect I think it comes with age and experience and everything else, now I'm going for 'good enough'. Did that person get to say what they wanted to? "Yes they did". Fine, that's enough. Rather than going away, I mean I still do go away sometimes because there are unresolvable issues, you know where you've got people who are incredibly disempowered, like I was saying before, who are meeting with somebody or a series of meetings with somebody is never going to resolve that huge imbalance but, I do feel now like I know what our limitations are and what our expectations of ourselves should be a bit more... (Alex, debrief 12:08 EMPHASIS in the original)

Alex expresses a more flexible approach to interpreting than her original approach. She sees a development in her professional approach to her job. Since her postgraduate training she feels more at liberty to account for power dynamics and redress power issues for the minority that she works with. She sees her profession as powerful because it facilitates deaf signers having their opinions and views 'heard' by the majority.

Bailey

This was the first debrief interview I conducted. I had not yet decided to ask about the 'ideal power dynamic' which I asked all of the other SLIs. Therefore, though there was some talk about role, I had not prioritised it as a topic for discussion in the debriefs. Bailey did discuss alignment and power however:

Alignment is power isn't it? I have the choice, the deaf person has the choice whether to be in a bad... whether to be aggressive towards the doctor or to try or not, they have choice but they have less choice than we do. Because we're not emotionally involved for one. But I do, I have the choice of how I manipulate power in a setting like that. And actually, I think that now that I'm thinking about it it's quite telling, I don't think I had any medical booking reflections, did I? (Bailey, debrief 17:14)

Bailey does a lot of medical assignments and did not write about any in her reflections, but she becomes aware that those assignments are pregnant with power dynamics as we spoke. This association of alignment with power was clearly a new thought for her as we spoke. Bailey is aware that some deaf signers have less choice than SLIs; she does not go into detail about this however she sees that she has more power at times and more choice to manipulate power.

Corey

After describing making a direct comment to the deaf signing client in the middle of an interpretation, Corey explains that “I stepped out of my traditional role as interpreter as [I] could see that things were quickly escalating” (Entry 2). The concept of ‘stepping out of a role’ is echoed in the research by Tate and Turner (2002) (see section 3.4.1); it is interesting to note that we are sixteen years on from that research and this concept is still being used. Corey has done some training on Dean and Pollard’s demand-control schema (2013) and refers at a different point to her being in a ‘practice profession’ (see section 3.5), which comes from the same body of work. Her use of the term ‘traditional role’ was something that I queried in our debrief conversation. Unfortunately, the phone call was not very clear, and the recording was patchy therefore there are some unclear segments. Corey described the use of that terminology in this way:

I kind of thought, I shouldn’t have put ‘traditional role’ cause I know there isn’t a traditional role, you know, and cause I [unclear] Robyn Dean and [unclear] conduit model cause it’s not how I ... put it this way, if I had been observed doing that I would certainly have to justify that action [...] Well sometimes when I’m working, and I think about the work that I’ve done with Robyn, the demand-control [schema], and then I think about other [regional interpreters] and if they were in that room at that moment, that would have been frowned upon. (debrief 5:00)

She feels conflicted by the opinions of her professional peers which appear to be in opposition to hers. They seem to be practicing the ‘traditional role’ of an interpreter which refers to the conduit model again and seems to obligate the SLI to deny their agency. She goes on to say,

I've just had some conversations about using different models [of interpreting] and I don't think there are a lot of interpreters that are up to date about what's going on and different models of interpreting. But there is still a real sense of 'you're invisible'. You know that you have no power in any communication at all and it's not professional to be you. (debrief 07:50)

Here we see a reference to invisibility and powerlessness and what Corey considers a widespread belief that SLIs have no power and should not be agents in an interaction. The conflict that Corey is struggling with is manifested in her description of an 'ideal' interpreting assignment,

It would be walking into a job that was already set up nicely [unclear] so there'd been an interpreter in before who'd explained how to use an interpreter, that the person knows that they are dealing with a deaf person. There's a job I go to [in a region] and it feels like, I'm not just doing the conduit model because I clarify [unclear], but it really feels like it's between the doctor and the patient. And seemingly the doctor always requests me, and you'd never know it because it doesn't feel like I'm there. I know I'm very much there, I'm interpreting between the two. And I think he's just got the sense of he's interested in his patient and wants to know what's going on and he likes an interpreter who's got background. So, I don't think it's about me, it's about continuity. And she [the deaf signer] knows how to work with him, cause she's had him for years. So, for me it feels a bit like, I don't have the power there, I don't want power, but I feel I'm just doing my job and I don't need to be doing any more than that because it's already set up nicely, from the minute you walk in the focus is on the deaf person. They don't need to ask me anything, they know how to work with me already. The seating is already arranged, and I'm not even really acknowledged, which is fine, I know it seems rude, but it feels good to me, I enjoy that job. And I enjoy coming out of there feeling, 'that felt as close as direct communication to me than any interpreting'. (Corey debrief 11:53)

This description is heavy with the struggle of wanting to be a conduit interpreter, not dealing with an imbalance, or needing to take action to clarify, but simply not having to do that because everyone in the interaction understands how this works. She even tells me that in an ideal situation another interpreter would have explained how interpreting

works before she arrives at the assignment. This is a curious statement because the idea of having to use her agency to ensure that the clients understand how interpreting works feels uncomfortable for her, despite training to the contrary. She talks about feeling like she is not there, even though she is there, and she does not have power and does not want power. She seems to be negating her agency and at the same time reminding herself that she has agency. This conflicted understanding of her professional role and responsibilities shows how the professional discourse that she is surrounded by constantly impacts on what she values in an interpreted interaction. The new discourse that she is learning about appears to be causing significant friction with the professional discourse of her peers, which remains unresolved at this moment in her practice.

Darcy

Darcy mentions her role in her reflections on two occasions. Unfortunately, Darcy was the SLI whose debrief interview had no audio, so I am unable to compare her written reflections with her dialogue. It is worth looking at her comments about role however. Darcy describes an assignment in which she is interpreting in an educational environment with a deaf signer who has learning difficulties. She says,

I found the whole situation very challenging. I constantly questioned my own role in empowering the Deaf student, and the most appropriate way to do this. I also had to recognise the limits of my own role in the ‘success’ of the student (i.e. him passing the exams). (Darcy, Entry 4)

Darcy is juggling the deaf signer’s need for more support to understand the course and the teacher’s direct questions to her about the deaf man’s needs. She is describing the empowerment of the student as part of her role but is also conflicted about the extent to which that is appropriate. It seems she is concerned about the deaf student succeeding and is trying to reconcile her empowerment of him, which may or may not lead to him passing the exams for the course. For Darcy, then, role is entangled with elements of power, but definitions of empowerment and the boundaries of this are unclear.

In a separate assignment, she describes an employment setting with hearing employers and a deaf signing employee who has additional problems which have led to him receiving support from a deaf advocate. She is interpreting a disciplinary meeting. She writes,

My allegiances felt tricky to manage. I was aware of them as I was working and trying to remain as impartial as possible within my decision making. I was booked by the employer, but they refused to give me any background information. So, I received my prep in a biased way from the advocate, leading me to feel an allegiance with her and the Deaf man. Then, as the employer put their side across I could feel my own awareness of good working practices kick in and feel some allegiance to the employer. As the meeting went on, and all sides had had their say, I felt more easily able to be impartial and focus on the facts of the situation. Allegiance definitely impacted on decisions I made that affected power dynamics to some extent.

[...]

I think the only thing I would have changed in this booking is to be more assertive in asking to speak to the employer in advance. This may have helped me [sic] impartiality to be clearer from the start. Also, it would have been good to speak to the Deaf man in advance. (Darcy, Entry 5)

Darcy here uses the word “allegiance” to talk about her alignment with different clients. She equates “good working practices” with impartiality and equal allegiance to the clients. The principle of impartiality is certainly something that she is struggling with. She wants to achieve impartiality and reflects on how she has failed to do that during moments in the assignment. This discussion is reminiscent of Llewellyn-Jones and Lee’s (2014) work on role-space, which dismisses the possibility of impartiality but does promote being “bi-partial” (see section 3.3). Darcy does not seem to be denying her agency in her reflections but is still struggling with her positioning and alignment with different clients and the dynamicity of this alignment.

Eli

The underlying assumption in many of Eli’s narratives is that she should only intervene as an agent if absolutely necessary. In her first reflection she makes two statements that relate directly to her role. Firstly, in an assignment where the deaf signing client has been given a diagnosis of terminal cancer, the assignment draws to an end and Eli has to leave to go to another assignment. She writes:

I was later able to arrange for [the deaf signer’s] friend [name] to visit him the evening he was given his diagnosis although I did not tell him why [the deaf

signer] wanted to see him, otherwise I would have gone back to see him from a human perspective rather than as an interpreter. (Eli, Entry 1)

Here we see the role of the interpreter being separated from the role of being ‘human’, which is a striking comment. I infer from this that Eli meant as a friend, or someone who has known this client for a long time and who would be able to comfort him in that capacity. She mentions needing to get to another assignment and the conflict that she feels because she has to leave him on his own having just received this diagnosis. In some way, Eli does not feel that she can be humane or empathetic when she is working in an interpreting assignment, which strikes me as the emergence of the conduit model. Her way of managing this is to intervene in a different way by contacting the friend of the deaf client; a use of her agency that does not seem to be problematic for her. When I asked her about the ideal interpreting power dynamic she responded:

When there isn’t one. [The clients] come together, do what they’ve got to do, all say bye and go. I mean to me that’s the ideal. If it’s a row, you know, come together, have the row, then go and that’s fine, that’s what they wanted to do. You know, that’s their power dynamic the row, isn’t it? That’s nothing to do with me really. And that’s what I like to do, I like to do my job and leave, or go for a cup of tea or whatever. You know, talk about something else as we walk in. For me that’s the ideal. Nobody needs to have any power. They all do their bit. Me included. But obviously that’s utopia. And I’m working at the sharp end quite a lot. (Eli, debrief 28:47)

Once again, the ideal power dynamic is when there is nothing to deal with. This chimes with Corey’s comments in response to this same question. The interesting part of this comment is when Eli says, “Nobody needs to have any power”. This assumes an underlying dynamic where no one has any power which reveals a belief that power is a negative thing and having power is problematic. Additionally, Eli has oppositional ideas in this excerpt; she wants nothing to do with the power dynamic that is happening between the clients and simultaneously, thinks that nobody needs to have any power. She also realises that what she has said is utopian and references working “at the sharp end” as though, in fact the opposite of what she has described occurs. Eli’s view of her own power and the power of others in her interactions is complex. It is difficult to find consistency in her approach, and yet she is assertive in the way she presents her views.

Francis

Contrastingly, Francis appears more aware of her power and agency and the decision-making process in her reflections. She is clearer about the actions she took, why she took them and what the consequences were. In the debrief interview I asked her to characterise her role and prompted the discussion using the word ‘ally’ in contrast to ‘conduit’. She took a long time to find the words to describe her role and found it difficult. Part of her response goes as follows:

I mean I think, another word, I’m not concerned about the word ally, I’m good with it and it’s positive and stuff like that. I also have an ‘enabling’ function...So, gosh it’s complicated now [...] I don’t know. So, one of the things I’m conscious of when I meet these people who are disenfranchised - and that sort of sums up the fact that they have less world knowledge than the average person. They certainly have less knowledge and experience of the systems in which I meet them and I have much more because I work with many people in those systems and they move alone by themselves through them. So, I recognise what I know that they don’t know. And I think I spend time making choices about what is a priority... what is a priority from moment to moment, and a priority for the patient to navigate and negotiate these things and how they can have the conversations they want with people. Or even, suggest the conversations that they might want to have with people. So that’s kind of enabling and it is as an ally to them. I don’t know, it’s a very, it’s a tricky one to get hold of. (Francis, debrief 11:16)

Francis has described the majority of her clientele as disenfranchised and as a result she recognises that her own knowledge can be greater than theirs. Therefore, she sees herself as an ally and an ‘enabler’. The ‘enabling’ aspect of her role is interesting; to my knowledge, this term does not resonate with literature on interpreting. In this excerpt, Francis is suggesting that she has to make decisions on behalf of the deaf signers she works with because they may not be able to navigate health systems or other types of systems easily. She may suggest that they could take one or other action; offering the deaf client an option that they may not have considered so that they can achieve their goals within that setting. Francis’ sense of agency seems to be reasonably clear to her, even though she is unable to name the model she is basing it on. Perhaps referencing a

specific model is unhelpful because the models on offer do not take account of all the variables that have to be considered.

Another notable statement in the debrief interview that is worth analysing is when Francis describes knowing some clients so well that they will hug her as a greeting; something she feels she needs to forewarn hearing clients about.

...so, it's expected and certainly if I don't initiate that kind of greeting it will be initiated. It will happen, there's no avoiding [it]. Now I think it's really important that other people understand what that's about. Particularly as we're supposed to be impartial. And whatever other mythical states... (Francis, debrief 19:08)

The reference to impartiality as a mythical state shows that Francis has considered the impossibility of this principle. She still seems to believe it to be an obligation of the profession but at the same time understands that it is an impossible feat. Therefore, she feels it is important to be transparent with her clients.

Jamie

In answer to my question about the ideal power dynamic, Jamie reflects the views of other interpreters, who we have already heard from. She says:

I think it's, yes, I do have those [ideal power dynamics], they're not all grim... and that's usually when both, if it's just a triad, it's when both the deaf person and the hearing person know each other, have met before and they all know how to work with interpreters. And then it just feels lovely, it sometimes works with uninformed hearing people, cause they just get it, really quickly and it doesn't feel like you're not there, but it just feels like you're all working together, it's like a synchronised balance almost, it feels really nice, but I would say that those are in the minority, those instances. (Jamie, debrief 15:55)

We see again the desire for there to be balanced power dynamics from the start and a working knowledge of interpreting by all parties. This would not require the interpreter to explain their role and manage a problematic power dynamic, which means they would not need to use their agency to intervene. However, by her own admission, Jamie tells me that these instances are rare in her work.

Kendall

Kendall seems to be conflicted about her role in similar ways to other participants. In one reflection Kendall describes interpreting for a nurse and a foreign deaf signer who has limited English literacy. The deaf signer is given a leaflet by the nurse explaining about a medical issue. Kendall knows that the deaf signer cannot access this leaflet easily.

I felt the familiar temptation to act as advocate/add more information/give my opinion and struggled to withhold this. Thankfully I know that this patient accesses a drop-in service to see an interpreter for translation and can also see a support worker, so was able to remind her of this outside of the appointment. I have had other situations similar to this and have not given [my] opinion but always feel it is an injustice to expect a person to go away with a leaflet they cannot understand and make a decision based on it. Usually I ask the medical practitioner to expand and take more time, which is generally more effective. (Kendall, Entry 2)

Here Kendall discusses using her agency in different ways: to talk to the deaf signer after the appointment to suggest that they make use of a drop-in service; and to ask a medical professional to explain something that she knows a patient cannot access. This is clearly a use of her own power to ensure access. However, Kendall reflects on the ‘temptation’ to intervene in various ways as well, particularly by giving her opinion. The use of the word ‘temptation’ suggests that these actions would be violating a rule or set of principles. It is not clear whether this is because the nurse was working to a tight schedule and did not have a lot of time or whether Kendall feels that these actions go against her own ethics. She does suggest that she withholds her opinion in other situations too. In her debrief interview I asked Kendall about whether she considered herself to be an ally of deaf signing clients. She responded at some length:

Probably yes. I think, I think I do consider myself to be but I’m also hoping that I’m not patronising in that. And, in fact, allying sometimes means I’m a bit, not harder but, some of my team [of interpreters] will be worrying about leaving a deaf person, or the appointment was going a bit longer [...] and they will feel personally obligated to do more, and I sit there and go ‘well [the deaf signer is] an adult, they’ve spent their whole life pretty much without access, they’re going to survive, I need to go home now. I can’t do this anymore.’ I’m going to do this,

this and this and make sure everything is in place for you but I'm not going to hold your hand for the entire operation, or something like that. So, I tend to back off a bit more, I will be their ally but without taking over, without wanting to say 'I'm just going to do it all for you love, don't worry and you know I'll make it all better'. That's not going to help them in the long run, and they need to understand the role, don't expect the next interpreter to do that. So sometimes I come across as a little bit less of an ally by saying, 'no, you step back now'. (Kendall, debrief 30:27)

Kendall is arguing against what she thinks is the common conception of the ally model, which, from her description, appears to be more like a 'helper' model (for a description of the ally model see section 3.4.3). She is clear that using the ally model means that she is not patronising, does not 'take over' and control the deaf signer, and sees that there are limits to her own role as an interpreter and recognises her own needs. Kendall seems to be aware of her own agency, she recognises that she could behave in ways that do not promote a deaf signer's autonomy and simultaneously she is constrained by some aspects of what she perceives her role requires. There are hints that this might be impartiality, however, it is not completely clear.

Morgan

Morgan discusses many situations where she has a lot of input into the interpreted event. She also discusses writing emails to various hearing professionals to enlighten them about what a deaf signing client may need in terms of communication and support. In the debrief interview, we discussed her role and whether it requires this type of peripheral work. She responded in this way:

...if the role is to hold communication and manage the communication then I shouldn't be really doing any of that [writing emails etc], I should just let them get on with it. But, which I could in [a different region where she worked before] but down here in [her current region] it's like, you know, you're going back... and there aren't enough deaf professionals and so you're facing these real community challenges. And letting some things go that you go 'well that's ok'. We work with a number of chaotic families, we see a lot of young deaf, particularly males, that are getting themselves into all sorts of trouble and often as the interpreting team we're seeing more of it than other professionals are. And

information that we're holding and we kind of go 'at what point do we do a referral?' ... I was chatting with one of my colleagues last week and it was kind of like 'are we worried enough to tell social services, or do they already know?' ... kind of like that 'dilemma-y' type stuff. (Morgan, debrief 12:30)

Morgan is asking herself how much peripheral intervention she should make as an interpreter. She is intervening to ensure what she perceives to be the best outcome for a deaf signer, but at the same time she wonders whether this is appropriate. She holds a lot of knowledge about clients and can build a picture of behaviours that other professionals may not be able to see. Later she reveals some of her motivations:

I do have a real strong sense of social justice and that's kind of why I think I do what I do, and why I'm in this job and it's... the political side of it, I'm not a big politician but I am quite political in terms of social justice. So, for when I see equality in the room and then people are having a GREAT discussion and I can, what I sometimes say, [inverted air commas] 'just interpret', it's just lovely and I come out and I'm not left with... I come out with a smile going 'I've just facilitated a great discussion'. (Morgan, debrief 19:11)

This echoes, once again, the ideal interpreting situation that many of the SLIs have mentioned, where they can focus on the language transfer and nothing else. The power dynamics seem to be equal and therefore the interpreter can focus their efforts on the communication work. The conduit model seems to be leaking into this description particularly with the use of the words 'just interpreting'. Simultaneously, Morgan is passionate about social justice and makes efforts to equalise power dynamics that seem unfair in her written reflections.

Taylor

Taylor did not write about role in her reflections and we only touched on it briefly in her debrief. She does mention her bias very early on in the interview, however:

I think the power thing is complex because you... if I'm honest my bias is always towards the deaf person, often especially if they're in a professional setting and everybody's there, usually about ten people, and one individual often, you know,

the power dynamic's very incredible. But I don't think any of my scenarios were like that, having said that. (Taylor debrief, 02:35)

Taylor is transparent about her bias or alignment here. She sees deaf signers outnumbered by hearing clients and feels, perhaps, empathy for their situation. She does not discuss in her reflections the specifics of intervening on behalf of someone. Rather her reflections are more global: they are often about the organisations she is working with and how they manage power dynamics, for example. She appears to consider power dynamics at a more structural level.

We have seen in this brief section on the discourse of interpreting models that the SLIs all have different perspectives of their agency, which are often complicated and conflictual. They regularly refer to or allude to the conduit model and their desire for their job to be purely about language transfer. Many of them are clear that this is unrealistic but struggle with the perceived constraints of their role and the conflicting aspects of their work in relation to power dynamics. This is considered in more depth in the discussion chapter in section 7.3.2.

In the following sections 5.2.2 to 5.2.5 I will discuss metaphors of power that emerged from the reflections. As described in section 4.4.1, I read the narratives using a critical discourse approach to find instances of metaphors. I found four types of metaphors linked to power that I will discuss in turn starting with power im/balance, followed by knowledge as power, power as an object/commodity and power as a tool. Not surprisingly there is overlapping of these metaphors in their reflections and this will become apparent.

5.2.2 Power Im/Balance

Seven of the participants wrote about power balances or imbalances. This metaphor, which implies the quantifying of power on each side of a scale, leads SLIs to make comments like there is a 'huge power imbalance' (Alex, Entry 2). In the following example, Jamie is interpreting for a deaf signer with mental health challenges, their personal assistant (who is also a deaf signer), the client's two deaf signing parents, a hearing community psychiatric nurse and a hearing GP in an assessment for a Care Programme Approach (CPA). Jamie tells us that she 'felt powerless in this setting' because there are several deaf clients with different communication needs but only one interpreter who has to manage these needs. She then comments in her reflection that,

The power was weighted heavily in favour of the hearing, medical professionals.
(Jamie, Entry 2)

The comment above reveals that power can be metaphorically heavier for participants who are hearing professionals even when in numerical terms there are more deaf signers in the room. Therefore, this probably relates to the power that the medical professions have and their capacity to make decisions about a person's life. The GP and CPN are gatekeepers to services and support for the deaf signing service-user under review, which gives them the advantage of Foucault's bio-power (see section 2.2.1). 'Imbalance', therefore, refers to the relative positions of power that are being held.

'Imbalance' is usually seen as negative and something to be avoided, in the reflections. For example, Morgan suggested the hiring of a deaf advocate in order to create a better 'deaf/hearing power balance in the room' (Entry 4). In contrast to the example just given in Jamie's reflection, Morgan perceives the increase in numbers of deaf individuals as creating a better balance, even though the hearing professionals are still the gatekeepers holding power. The balance can sometimes be 'redressed' by the SLI which also suggests the idea that the imbalance is a negative concept. It seems that not having a balance is *de facto* discrimination or disempowering one member of the triad. The imbalance is also described as something that the SLIs 'face' (Alex, Entry 2), which potentially reveals negative connotations because of the implication that they are 'facing an opponent' or, at the very least, something that has to be reckoned with. Power imbalance is therefore often represented by the SLIs as an enemy that must be fought against. It is also represented as something that can be manipulated one way or another. This suggests that power dynamics are indeed dynamic and changeable.

One question to ask in regard to this conceptualising of power is whether gatekeeping power is always a 'bad' thing. Francis gives an example of a balanced power dynamic in a setting where gatekeeping bio-power is evident; a doctor's office with a deaf signing patient. She writes:

My appraisal of the dynamics is that they are in balance in so much as they ever could be. The doctor is very respectful of both me and the patient. The doctor allows time for the patient to ask questions relevant to the immediate situation and his health, also general questions. The patient often asks for explanations of things he has seen, but does not fully understand, that are in the news. The doctor

makes time for this and for his considered and full answers to encourage an interactive discussion. Both doctor and patient allow me the time I need to think and render messages from source to target language as best as I can. The patient, lacking much world-knowledge and having very low English literacy, needs me to think hard (!) for both my understanding of them and for my formulation of messages they will understand (hopefully at first pass.) (Francis, Entry 1)

This excerpt reveals that institutional power does not have to be negative and can be used to engender supportive and empowering power dynamics, which encourage the potentially disempowered patient to engage in interactions. Francis here seems to be taking into account the biopower of the doctor in her evaluation. Therefore, the metaphor of balance has the potential to offer a positive connotation.

If we return to Jamie to analyse her debrief interview, we see that she mentions balance after I prompt her to discuss an ‘ideal’ power dynamic. She, like Francis, understands a previous working relationship to be the catalyst for these balanced interactions (this excerpt was used in section 5.2.1, but here the focus is on the metaphor being used),

I do have those, they’re not all grim, and that’s usually when both, if it’s just a triad, it’s when both the deaf person and the hearing person know each other, have met before and they all know how to work with interpreters. And then it just feels lovely, it sometimes works with uninformed hearing people, cos they just get it, really quickly and it doesn’t feel like you’re not there, but it just feels like you’re all working together, it’s like a synchronised balance almost, it feels really nice, but I would say that those are in the minority those instances. (Jamie, debrief 15:55)

Jamie’s description of the balance requires background knowledge of the clients and a prior relationship with each member of the triad. However, this can also be achieved with a hearing person who has not used the services of a SLI before, though this occurs less often. The addition of the adjective ‘synchronised’ suggests that each person in the interaction is taking their own responsibility for the balance. This ideal balance provokes Jamie to say that it feels ‘lovely’ and ‘nice’, suggesting that this seems to be a comfortable place from which to interpret for her.

There is a perception that the im/balance can be changed, for example, by having direct conversations with each client to ‘oil the wheels’, which is how Francis achieves the power balance with the doctor and deaf patient (Francis, Entry 1), or the addition of a deaf advocate (Morgan, Entry 4).

This metaphor has some value because it allows SLIs to consider the weighting of power in an assignment and how it is distributed. As a literal balancing scale does not always have to be fully tipped, there is room for a dynamic understanding of power here, in which the balance can move up and down within an interaction. The difficulty of this metaphor is perhaps that there are only two points on the balance and if one places two clients or two groups of clients on the scales, where does the interpreter place herself? In my mind, there is nowhere for her to be. However, as we have seen from the excerpts, SLIs do act to change these imbalances therefore it would be more accurate to utilize a metaphor which includes SLIs as an agent of power who affects the outcome. I discuss this further in the discussion in 7.3.1.

5.2.3 Knowledge as Power

The concept of ‘having knowledge’ is talked about as creating balance or imbalance of power for SLIs. Additionally, knowledge can be imparted to others to redress an imbalance. This can take different forms in the reflections. Not being given knowledge prior to an appointment can disempower the SLI. Having knowledge about a deaf client’s background can empower the SLI. Recognising that the SLI has knowledge of one of their clients, which empowers them but simultaneously gives them power over that individual, has the potential to affect their working relationship. An example of this is given by Kendall in an interpreting assignment at a police station where there is a deaf signing client and a police officer. Kendall writes:

I felt the power imbalance of two hearing people who understand the way the world of fraud works, trying to impart this knowledge to someone who does not have basic knowledge of the world, let alone cyber space. (Kendall, Entry 4)

Background knowledge gives the interpreter the sense that she possesses power that she, in partnership with the policeman, needs to ‘impart’ to the deaf user in order for him to understand that he is being defrauded. Therefore, having knowledge equates with having power and not having knowledge equates with disempowerment. Kendall reiterates this

metaphor in a medical setting where there is a deaf signing patient and an English-speaking nurse. Kendall summarises the causes of metaphorical imbalances:

My issues of ‘power’ arose from my knowledge of the patient, of the condition, and understanding how limited her access to information was. The nurses expected the previous appointments to have explained some key concepts, but this had either not happened or she had not understood. (Kendall, Entry 2)

Kendall feels that she has more power because she has more knowledge, and the deaf client lacks access to information and knowledge about her condition and the treatment she is being offered, something the nurse assumes she understands. Kendall describes negotiating this lack of knowledge, her own awareness of it, and ways in which she can impact on this knowledge being shared with the deaf signer. The SLI holds this knowledge and therefore has the power to enlighten others and potentially change the power dynamic in some way. This resonates with Foucault’s concept of power/knowledge (see section 2.2.1), because Kendall is able to see that the medical discourses are constraining the patient who appears unable to empower herself. Kendall describes her own concerns about her potential to impact on the power dynamic when she says, “I felt the imbalance of my knowledge and position as a hearing person with access to information, but that did not give me the right to offer advice which could be misconstrued” (Entry 2). Knowledge as power offers an interesting and paradoxical metaphor because Kendall is aware of her own knowledge but simultaneously conflicted about how to use this without overstepping perceived (and unclear) boundaries.

This interconnection assists in understanding the paradox that SLIs have to manage. SLIs often have knowledge about their regular clients because they have attended many different interactions with them. This puts them in a position of power over the deaf client, and rarely the hearing client. SLIs often have knowledge about the deaf signer’s situation, which may make a deaf signer feel vulnerable. Additionally, having knowledge about a client’s lack of knowledge is also a powerful position to hold. SLIs may be the only person in the room who knows that someone does not understand a concept that they need to understand in order to be safe or healthy. For example, if the SLI chooses not to clarify information about medication when they know that a deaf patient has not understood, then they are not simply being passive or neutral, they are choosing to allow that person to go away ignorant of what they need to do with their medication. This has the potential to have very serious consequences.

Beyond knowing a client, SLIs often have access to discourses that some deaf signers do not. Depending on educational background and other factors, some deaf signers have not had the opportunity to learn the discourses of power that permeate everyday life. The discourse of a benefits appointment for example, in which a service-user has to prove their need for a benefit, may be a discourse that a SLI has been privy to regularly, but which a deaf signer has not. Knowledge of this discourse gives some power because it allows the knower to strategize and use appropriate terminology, ensuring that needs are clearly presented. SLIs can choose to reveal this knowledge to deaf signers, who may not be aware of this discourse, so that they can choose to strategize or not.

SLIs' knowledge gives them power, but their power often makes them uncomfortable and conflicted. In essence, their privileged position of being knowledgeable confers responsibilities on them that they would sometimes rather ignore or reject. At other times their knowledge hinders their ability to do their job.

In this excerpt from one of Taylor's reflections about a benefits interview there is an obvious discomfort attached to knowledge that she holds about a client,

I knew the client today had committed crimes that provoked a strong reaction in me. For which she has never been successfully prosecuted. So to find myself in this context with a known perpetrator made me feel unsympathetic and [un]empathetic to her benefit situation. I also wasn't prepared to be flexible [about] working times i.e. I made it very clear that only an hour was available. The situation made me feel very uncomfortable and had I been able to I would refuse to work with this client. (Taylor, Entry 4)

Taylor's power to reject taking this interpreting work has been taken from her by her employer, but her knowledge leaves her in a difficult position because she cannot ignore what she knows, and yet has to behave as though she does not know it. We see through this reflection that power as knowledge does not always work in the favour of the SLI, particularly when they feel that their professional responsibility requires them to ignore their prior knowledge. She exerts some power in this assignment by being inflexible about times because of her knowledge.

This 'power is knowledge' metaphor is a useful one, I believe, because it uncovers something of the nature of power. Explicitly understanding what you know and what others know, or conversely do not know, helps to reveal the reasons for uneasy power dynamics. Having power is not innately bad because power can be used to create good

outcomes. Having knowledge is also not a negative thing because to be an expert or professional requires knowledge of a certain type and in order to be able to work in many different situations knowledge of those fields is also beneficial to clients. Problems arise when knowledge of an individual confers power over their lives in some way. In the same way that a psychiatrist has the power to decide if a patient ought to be institutionalised, an interpreter might be in a position to reveal information about a deaf signer to a hearing professional which would go against the aims of that deaf signer. The numbers of deaf signers are relatively small and the numbers of interpreters even smaller which means that inevitably interpreters can have intimate knowledge of a deaf signer's background from regularly working with them. This requires trust and professional integrity between interpreters and deaf clients, which might not always be possible if there has been a breach of trust in previous assignments. Being aware of this interrelationship between power and knowledge is important for this type of work.

Though SLIs equate knowledge with power, there is an interpretation of this metaphor that could add more nuance to their understanding of power dynamics; in Foucauldian theory, knowledge and power are interconnected (see section 2.2.1). As agents of power SLIs are capable of foregrounding certain 'truths' about their profession, for example, their neutrality or non-biased machine-like capacity. In promoting this knowledge about their profession they can potentially privilege an understanding of their role that gives them power to remain detached and not take responsibility for making decisions that may be oppressive or biased.

5.2.4 Power as a Commodity

SLIs in this study also referred to power as though it were something that could be owned using the verbs: give, have, take, take back, reclaim but also describing power as being 'in the hands of' (Kendall, Entry 1) or 'in the room' (Darcy, Entry 2). This metaphor describes power as a commodity to be held, passed around, owned or redistributed. Darcy describes a situation where she is working with a co-worker in a training session and they are repeatedly having to clarify the meaning of contributions made by a participant who speaks heavily-accented English:

... we have *taken all the power in the room*, with all participants now looking to us, rather than the course leader. (Darcy, Entry 2, *italics mine*)

Not only has power been “taken” in this example but “all the power in the room”. This metaphor of power as a commodity extends to there being a finite amount of it that can be owned by one or more (two in this case) individuals in a given situation. Nobody else in the room is left with any power, in her description. In another SLI’s reflection the power dynamic is “in the hands of the son” (Kendall, Entry 1) where she perceives him as being in control of what is happening. Kendall believes that she and another participant do not have the capacity to change it. Similarly, in the following excerpt by Eli, she describes one person taking all the power and her own feelings of not having any power:

[An individual] seemed to get away nicely with *taking all the power in this situation*. I certainly felt *powerless* to change anything at the time after one attempt. (Eli, Entry 1, *italics mine*)

Eli perceives someone “taking” all the power which results in her feeling “powerless”. The suffix ‘less’ on the word ‘power’ indicates a lack of power or not-having, which reinforces the metaphor of power as a finite commodity so that when one person is holding it another cannot. Taking ‘all the power’ which has to be passed around if it is to be shared, creates an understanding that one can be in a powerless situation because your power has been taken. This positioning by SLIs of someone as a powerless victim or a powerful perpetrator offers a binary, where the power is not being simultaneously held by different interlocutors. If the metaphor shifts to one where power can be enacted by all members of an interaction, this could change the discourse to conceptualise SLIs as agents of change. If power is always potentially available to each interlocutor, then agency is also possible.

Alex’s reflection about a deaf client with learning disabilities and a hearing professional who is having an exclusive conversation with another hearing professional, shows the possibility of power being ‘taken back’;

I now feel that interjecting and redirecting the conversation back to the deaf person was important in enabling them to *take back some power*, and to have a say in what was their meeting. (Alex, Entry 2, *italics mine*)

In this excerpt Alex feels that the deaf client had a right to “some power” which had been taken from her. She deems this deaf signer to be vulnerable due to her additional disability and uses her agency to enable a redistribution of power. In enacting this power

shift, Alex does not refer to herself using her own power. She uses the passive construction “in enabling them” in which the deaf signer takes back control, even though the deaf signer is not in fact using their own agency to take anything. Alex disguises her own agency entirely, perhaps obfuscating her intervention because she feels unsure about the validity of it.

Finally, in this section, Eli describes a situation in which she uses her own power to give a client more power:

I decided to intervene by looking up her rights - *a bit of power of my own* here as I knew they existed and where to find them really quickly. [The student] is not a person who will always challenge things, she was quite likely to take the view that the tutor was right no matter what. *Giving [the student] the power to know* that she did have a right to interpretation altered her demeanour. She thought it was okay to ask because it was her right. (Eli, Entry 3, italics mine)

Here we see the SLI directly saying that they ‘own’ some power and that they ‘give’ power to someone else. The use of transitive verbs to describe what can be done with power assumes a subject and object - *I (subject) give you (object) some power* - but interestingly here, Eli nominalises the verb to ‘giving’ which obfuscates who gave the power to the student. From the context we can infer that it is Eli who has given this power, however by nominalising the verb she disguises her own agency in this action. Thus, in one paragraph Eli is direct about her agency in intervening and, conversely, shrouds the act of power-giving in passive constructions. It is notable here that Eli gives power by offering knowledge to the student.

This metaphor has the potential to confuse and obfuscate the nature of power and agency so that agents position themselves as powerful or powerless rather than having the potential to exert power imminently. In using this metaphor SLIs need to be careful not to assume that they are rendered powerless in a situation where they feel power is taken away. According to Foucault (see section 2.2.1), they have the potential to act as an agent of power but need to consider what strategies they can use to articulate it.

5.2.5 Power as a Tool and as a Weapon

Only one participant in the study, Eli, claims to ‘use’ her power, which was striking and therefore something I want to pay attention to, if only briefly. In four instances she directly states, “I used my power to...”. This metaphor of power as a tool

shows an understanding of agency and the exercising of power. Eli tells a story of how she used her power to “influence” someone, “leave” a situation and “inform” someone in different settings. She does not shy away from these direct impacts that she attempts to have on different situations. She deploys her power for specific reasons and takes responsibility for them having or not having their desired effects. Notably, it is also only Eli who refers to power as a weapon to be wielded or exerted or to be abused by different participants in her reflections. This metaphor of power as a tool recognises agency and it requires self-conscious reflection when it is used. It makes explicit who the user of the tool is and the purpose for using it, something which is often elusive in stories of power. Power tends to be abstracted and disengaged from the people or organisations that apply it.

We have seen in sections 5.2.2 to 5.2.5 different metaphors being used to describe power, some of which capture elements of the nature of power, and some which are more limiting. These metaphors are not peculiar to interpreters however, they are part of common parlance. It is worth examining the effect that they have on the way in which interpreters might analyse their own work, and their own agency, because these metaphors govern our “conceptual systems” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p.3). An examination of this is further discussed in section 7.3.1.

5.3 The Techniques of Power

Having initially analysed the ways in which SLIs talk about power by examining their role constructions and the metaphors they used I now want to explore agency in a different way. Do interpreters recognise and accept their agency and if they do what techniques do they employ when they are being agents of power? In this section, I will discuss the types of actions that SLIs describe taking when they are in situations where power dynamics are noticed. I have taken a slightly different approach to studying the phenomenon of power dynamics than Mason and Ren by focusing not on the interpreted interaction but the stories that SLIs tell in relation to their work, in order to understand what they are consciously doing. Though many of the actions could be observed empirically, the thought processes of the interpreter cannot. Mason and Ren show that interpreters do act in particular ways, but they cannot show whether interpreters are aware of these manipulations or how they perceive and rationalise them. In my own data, these actions are described in the reflections. I offer some excerpts from reflections and debrief interviews to illustrate these actions. The actions taken are categorised according to Mason and Ren’s taxonomy as follows: as *co-interlocutors* (5.3.1) both on the periphery

of the interpreted action and during the communicative interaction work; actions taken to create *empowerment* (5.3.2) which are made to support another client; actions taken from a *non-neutral stance* (5.3.3); and moments where the opposite of actions take place, *non-actions* (5.3.4), an additional category that I have added onto Mason and Ren's which I explain in detail later.

5.3.1 Co-Interlocutors

Mason and Ren list actions which position the interpreter as a 'co-interlocutor':

interpreters may voluntarily introduce themselves, propose a meeting format, explain cultural differences, answer a question, make a suggestion, or conduct small talk with one or both parties. As gatekeepers, they may sometimes even withhold certain information that they deem inappropriate (vulgar remarks, cultural taboos, etc.) or irrelevant, even if they are trained not to do so. (Mason and Ren 2012, p.243)

I read the narrative reflections of the participants searching for descriptions of actions they took that correlated with this type of description of being a co-interlocutor. In the following reflection Alex is interpreting in a social work setting with a hearing professional, a deaf signer with additional needs, and a deaf signing support worker. She describes how she becomes an interlocutor in the post-meeting debrief:

The person [the deaf signer] perhaps felt that they could gain control of the situation which was potentially one where they could lose face by having to discuss difficult issues and their past behaviour with a professional, who was there to let the person know that their behaviour had been unacceptable and would need to stop.

The deaf person continued to dominate the conversation throughout the meeting, and the support worker who had a better understanding of Deaf culture and a good rapport with the person, repeatedly brought them back to the topic, sometimes by signing direct to the person, in order to get their attention.

I felt this worked well, and a situation I may well have found very difficult to manage, felt much more achievable with the support of the member of staff. Having wrapped up the meeting, we said our goodbyes, and discussed how we felt it had gone once we had said goodbye to the deaf person.

The professional felt it had been a good meeting, said she had only met the person once before, and had realised during this meeting that their dominating the conversation was a way of avoiding the topic. *I explained* that because we are working with processing information and then passing the message on, we are slightly behind the person speaking or signing, which was why it had been difficult for the professional to interrupt at times. (Alex, Entry 4, *italics mine*)

Alex is essentially included in a debriefing about how the meeting went. In Mason and Ren's terms, she becomes a co-interlocutor at this point and offers her own opinions about how the meeting went, what was challenging and what worked. We do not know, because the details are not given, whether Alex was also interpreting this meeting because the hearing professional and deaf signing support worker were both there, so it is possible that she had to communicate this in English and BSL consecutively. Being both an interpreter and a co-interlocutor (particularly when working without a co-worker) disrupts the interpreted interaction and requires an interpreter to be clear about who is speaking if they are offering their own opinion. The debrief gives Alex an opportunity to discuss the power dynamic so that these two participants from the meeting are fully aware of the dynamic that she experienced. She appears to want to be clear that when the hearing professional found it difficult to interrupt it was complicated by the time lag which interpreters have to manage. This turn taking challenge impacts on the power dynamic because of the potential for one interlocutor to take the floor and hold it indefinitely, a behaviour which is itself a technique of power. Alex later reflects on how she managed this problem and I discuss this in the section entitled *non-neutral stance* below.

An interaction with some clients on the periphery of the 'official' communication work of interpreting is often mentioned by interpreters. They frequently discuss how the interpreting process works with clients, most often with hearing clients but also with deaf clients too. Seven of the ten SLIs in this study talked about a time when this had occurred in their work. Naturally the purpose for each was different and entirely event dependent. On one occasion Francis (Entry 4) speaks with a hearing social worker to explain the inappropriateness of using a family member to interpret because Francis is concerned about the deaf signer's rights. Eli (Entry 5) describes how she spoke to a nurse about the obstructive nature of a hospital technician's attitude towards her because it was affecting the interpreting process and therefore the access of the deaf patient. Morgan (Entry 3) and her co-worker are invited by hearing professionals to discuss a meeting that they had

struggled to interpret to their satisfaction. They give their opinion about the challenges they faced which made their work less effective. They are then joined by deaf colleagues who also offer their opinion (once again we do not know how this encounter was negotiated and whether one interpreter had to interpret simultaneously). Kendall (Entry 2) relates an incident in which she is asked at the very outset of an interpreting assignment whether sign language is universal and describes how she responds to the question herself but also interprets her response to the deaf patient. These instances of interpreters becoming co-interlocutors can occur, before, during and after the interpreted encounter and shows how SLIs regularly choose to be agents of power but also are often required to be by their clients' questions or invitations to engage.

In the following excerpt of the debrief interview with Francis I asked whether Francis regularly tries to contact a hearing client to explain how interpreting works beforehand. I was interested in the extent to which some SLIs initiate this preparative work with clients and whether it has an impact on the following interaction. Francis' response came as follows:

Francis: So, if I've not worked with someone before yes, I make every effort to speak to them in advance. And it's far more likely these days that when I'm going to meet a new-to-me professional, I probably already know their client, that they don't know. And I always declare that, and I make it very clear. I make it very clear because, ok so one, you know, strikingly obvious thing is there is a patient here, a female, who is, is she 70 now? She's very fit, very active but she does have quite a lot of health appointments. And whenever she sees me, and I know this happens with a couple of other preferred interpreters, she wants to greet us and hug us. So, it's a bit of a deaf thing, the hugging, but this is unavoidable.

Heather: And offensive if you go 'don't hug me'

Francis: Exactly, so it's expected and certainly if I don't initiate that kind of greeting it will be initiated. It will happen, there's no avoiding [it]. Now I think it's really important that other people understand what that's about. Particularly as we're supposed to be impartial. And whatever other mythical states...[unclear]

Heather: yes indeed

Francis: you know so, so that's a really obvious one where a professional can see me and their patient having physical contact, some intimacy, in that greeting. And I think it needs an explanation. There are other examples of my prior knowledge of a person. Which, they're not... it is a form of intimacy, it's a form of... things I know about someone that other people don't, things that I've experienced with them, things I've witnessed because I've been their interpreter before. And I think if I don't declare that to other professionals it can come up and it can play out that they start to realize that there is some history between me and a client/patient. And again, I don't think that helps me in the professional work, well, if they start to doubt me. Or question or just be puzzled about 'what is my relationship with this person?' They thought I was just an interpreter they'd booked. So more and more, I would, I have always wanted to talk to people prior to assignments. And always make an effort to do so. But there are certain things now that I want, I don't only want them to tell me things, I want to tell them things as well. And be honest, so that we can work well without them having any, without them having concern. And I do it almost instinctively now. Sometimes I go to emergency situations, where there's a patient, or it could be a social services thing where they're a client, for them. I could turn up somewhere at short notice because it's a time of crisis or whatever, but with someone that doesn't know me, and I almost immediately arrive, greet them, greet the deaf person and say straight away 'I know the family well'. Just that, you know, 'I know the family well, I've worked in the city for ten years'. And that's all I say, all I say and I leave it to them to ask me anything they want to ask me about that... (Francis, debrief, 17:52)

The interesting element to this discussion with Francis is that she has recognised that there are interwoven power dynamics implied within the relationship between an interpreter and a regular deaf client that have the potential to contribute to suspicion, confusion or concern if they are not explained to the other party in the interaction. Taking the responsibility to explain the background of this is partly about highlighting cultural differences, partly about transparency but also about pre-empting any power dynamics that might occur in reaction to a perceived intimacy between the SLI and the deaf client. This agency can be applied outside of the interpreted event but also during it, depending on the circumstances.

SLIs not only explain interpreting to clients but they also give information of other kinds before during and after the interpreted communication. This takes different forms

and in the reflections there are various types of information offered. Morgan (Entry 5) gives information to housing officers/social workers about the need for a deaf advocate in an interaction she is involved in. In a separate reflection, Morgan tells a nurse that the deaf patient needs to be engaged with directly (rather than the patient's mother) (Entry 1). In fact, Morgan describes doing extensive work outside of appointments to give linguistic information about BSL and to explain to social service professionals how to work with a foreign deaf person who does not appear to use BSL fluently. She does this in an attempt to make the services as accessible as possible to the deaf client. Darcy (Entry 3) gives information to a tutor about accommodations for deaf students attending college whilst trying to be as careful as possible not to talk about the individual deaf student she is working with. Eli (Entry 1) informs a nurse about the family situation of a deaf patient who is terminally ill so that the hospital, who so far have not been able to communicate with the patient, can inform the next of kin. Eli (Entry 3) also gives a student information about her rights as a deaf student.

Similarly, cultural differences are often highlighted by SLIs. Alex tells me "I felt I also needed to flag up culturally important markers, such as the deaf person's first language being BSL and that this may have an effect on their understanding of written information" (Alex, Entry 2) in a meeting with a hearing professional who appears not to fully understand this. Corey describes actively communicating with a nurse in an employment office due to miscommunications that occurred during an assignment. She writes, "I happen to know one of the nurses that works in the PIP office and have passed on information about Deaf Awareness training for the staff to try and resolve some of these issues" (Corey, Entry 2). Finally, Eli gives an example of negotiating with an independent review officer about how to set up an interview room before the deaf service users arrive in order to ensure privacy. She explains that the windows from the corridor into the room need to be covered so that potential passers-by cannot "eavesdrop" on the conversation (Entry 4). All of these actions, these moments of agency in which the SLIs are co-interlocutors, show how visible SLIs are when they are interpreting (see section 3.3.1). In the previous three examples we also see how the actions that are taken empower the deaf clients, by emphasising cultural differences which impact on the treatment that the hearing professionals are proposing, or by explaining that the ways in which they are behaving are not taking into account the needs of the deaf signing clients. This leads me to discuss the next category of agency that SLIs use: that of empowerment.

5.3.2 Empowerment

As agents of empowerment, Mason and Ren tell us that an:

... empowerment action refers to the verbal or non-verbal strategies [interpreters] employ to enable a disadvantaged party to have better access to information, to take a turn to speak, to decide on their own to do or not do something. (Mason and Ren 2012, p.243)

In the reflections below, we can see actions taken that promote empowerment of a deaf client. They include: double-checking, interrupting, redirecting, controlling, repeating, enforcing communication rules or unpacking information.

In the following excerpt several actions are taken by the SLI, Alex, who is concerned about “sidelining” of the deaf client, who has a learning disability as well. They are in a health appointment, with a hearing health professional and a hearing support worker of the deaf client. I have italicised actions taken by Alex:

Power difference between the professional, support worker and Deaf person was pronounced, the professional was not comfortable giving the information to the Deaf person, and began to shift her attention to the support worker.

I felt that the deaf person was becoming sidelined, and I *repeated the questions* to the Deaf person and *redirected the conversation back to them, giving their answers* when the hearing participants were discussing the information.

The professional kept addressing the support worker, who also redirected questions back to the deaf person. The professional felt that the course was not suitable for the person, and said at one point, as the Deaf person had made a side remark, “Oh, she obviously doesn’t have the concentration for this.”

At one point I *asked if I could interject*, and *reiterated a point* I had made before the meeting about materials needing to be visual if possible, and enlarged so that the person could read them with their poor eyesight, as suggested earlier by the support worker.

The professional also offered the Deaf person some activity groups, and the deaf person agreed that they would like to participate in one of them with support.

The support worker was asked by the professional whether they could meet next time without the Deaf person to pass on any useful information. The support worker, suggested that would be ok, and that the Deaf person should be present for some of that meeting. They went on to arrange a time. I interpreted this to the Deaf person, *again checking that they would like to be present*, and they agreed that they wanted to be there.

I feel that in this situation that the professional was not comfortable, and was unsure how to work with someone with a learning disability, and they did say this at the end of the meeting. The learning disability team were not involved, and this may have added to the complicated nature of the meeting. I felt *I needed to act much more as an active participant* and to *advocate* for the Deaf person who was becoming very marginalised. (Alex, Entry 2)

This narrative by Alex displays a range of actions to empower the client who is being marginalised. The repeating of information directly to the deaf client and redirecting of questions, that have been asked to the support worker, back to the deaf client are attempts to re-empower the deaf client so that they can express their own opinions. Alex refuses to collude in the exclusion of the deaf client and actively works to include them. She also asks permission to be a co-interlocutor and reminds the professional of a point made earlier by the support worker, thereby strengthening the message that the deaf client needs specific support for real access to be a possibility. Furthermore, when the professional turns to the support worker to have a conversation about a future meeting, which is deliberately exclusionary, Alex refuses to allow this to happen by explicitly making sure that the deaf client is in agreement with the outcome. In Alex's final paragraph of this excerpt she tells me that she needed to be an "active participant" and follows up with the word "advocate". Interestingly, there is a support worker in the room who, one might imagine, has more of a responsibility to advocate for their client. However, Alex appears to believe that this is not enough because she makes herself so visible in this interaction.

The action of checking with a client comes up several times throughout other reflections. In a conference setting, with two deaf clients and two interpreters, Bailey asks the deaf client she has been assigned about her opinion of this:

I deferred to her and asked her ‘are you happy for me to interpret your workshop?’ She said she was. Because she had seemed so strident before I wanted to make sure she was happy instead of deciding for her. (Bailey, Entry 1)

There is another SLI available for this client to work with but Bailey double checks on this client’s desires and promotes her autonomy. In a separate reflection, Morgan recalls how she and a co-worker SLI work with a specialist nurse of a client who has multiple health conditions and complex language needs where she has to intervene fairly regularly. She writes:

the [specialist] nurse is really understanding that this client needs specialist support. She describes us as [a] ‘dog without a bone’, but totally gets why we ask her to call up visual information, draw pictures and get her to repeat information. (Morgan, Entry 1)

This empowering of the deaf client takes several forms which are initiated by the SLIs. They request more visual information and repetition of elements of the discussion. These are not insignificant interventions and require the nurse to change her usual practice.

Another example of checking, with the aim of empowering, comes from Francis who double checks with a nineteen-year-old deaf patient at a doctor’s appointment as to whether he is expecting the person accompanying him to go into the appointment by saying:

I checked with the patient if he would like her to join us in the doctor’s room when called. I did this because I couldn’t be sure of any prior conversations and consent from him. He replied that he didn’t mind and that he wasn’t raising anything ‘serious’ so it was up to her. (Francis, Entry 3)

Although it is not made explicit in the reflection, Francis seems to do this in order to ensure that the woman accompanying the young man (who is not related to him but who is taking an interest in his welfare) is clear about expectations of who will attend the appointment and to empower the deaf man to choose what he would prefer. Francis initiates the exchange in which they decide that the woman does not need to accompany the young man. In another of Francis’ reflections (Entry 5), the purpose of checking was

to ensure that a young deaf signer with a mental health problem was aware that Francis was bound by confidentiality and that she had the right to ask for another interpreter if she wanted. This empowers the patient but also ensures transparency between Francis and the young person, who may not have had power over who was booked to interpret for their appointment.

In this last example of checking with the deaf client Corey narrates the circumstances of an appointment with a Personal Independence Payment assessment officer,

The client/we were called through and I asked the client if she wanted to explain how to use an interpreter or would she like me to. She was happy for me to do this. If I'm honest, I really do like the client but I am scared of her and know she could damage my reputation with a few cruel words therefore I am ultra careful around the power dynamics and make sure she is in full control. There are other grassroots clients out there that I would not ask about my explanation of using an interpreter, I would just do it and let them know I was going to do it. (Corey, Entry 1)

What intrigues me about this reflection is that Corey empowers the deaf client by checking whether they want to explain how the interpreter works (rather than assuming she will do it herself) but the motivation given is about protecting her own reputation. Corey judges that not doing this could jeopardise her professional standing (with the deaf client), which could have serious consequences. With other clients though, particularly "grassroots" ones, Corey would assume that this was her responsibility and she would act on it and be transparent about her actions. There is another power dynamic which is occurring here that Corey is responding to; not the marginalisation of the deaf client but the potential for the client's power to be used against her. This show of empowering the deaf client is double-edged and displays the nuanced interplay of power that SLIs need to negotiate.

A different example of empowering actions includes signalling the need to turn take. Bailey gives an example of this in her reflection of a training event:

During the presentations, [the] deaf guy really wanted to ask a question. He was sitting at [the] front and so couldn't see other raised hands and kept missing his chance to ask as hearing delegates kept jumping in. I leaned over to [the]

facilitator to make him aware and eventually he got to ask his q[uestion]. (Bailey, Entry 1)

Bailey does not suggest that she interrupted verbally however she communicates non-verbally that the deaf attendee wants to participate in the questions. This act of empowerment allows the deaf attendee to participate in a situation where the other attendees and the facilitator do not understand the challenge for a deaf participant and interpreter in turn taking. This is likely to be a regular occurrence for interpreters because they work with a time lag which makes interrupting or interjecting difficult to do.

In the following example Morgan has to verbally interrupt to ensure turn taking occurs respectfully in a social work meeting with a child, two grandparents, a social worker and an independent reviewing officer (IRO):

There was a lot of cross talking, for example, we would be voicing over and [the] social worker would start talking to nan, or nan would just say something. IRO also looked at us a lot of the time. I stopped the meeting about three times to emphasise the rules of good communication, saying things like we're still interpreting what X is saying so can you repeat that conversation so we can interpret it too. (Morgan, Entry 2)

The interruptions that Morgan feels compelled to make are to ensure that the deaf signing child can access the entire meeting, despite side conversations between hearing participants. Morgan uses her agency (along with her co-worker) to keep reminding the participants that good communication is not happening. In other reflections there are different versions of this type of empowering action: Corey (Entries 3 and 4) describes “shouting” in two separate reflections to get the attention of the participants in order to ensure that a deaf client and a deafblind client can have their say; Francis (Entry 5) interrupts a side conversation between a deaf patient and her support worker, whilst a doctor is on the phone, to draw the patient’s attention to the content of the phone call; Jamie (Entry 6) describes interrupting a GP who is using terminology that the deaf client cannot comprehend to ask for clearer explanations. All of these interruptions are motivated by a desire to empower the signing client.

In three different reflections SLIs describe ‘redirecting’ or ‘deflecting’ questions directed towards the interpreter back to the deaf client. This non-verbal action which has the effect of dismissing their own agency in answering a question (about BSL, their role or about the deaf client) reinforces the agency of the deaf client to the hearing participant.

Some of the SLIs in this study seem to find direct engagement, by participants who want to know their opinion about something, uncomfortable and use this strategy of redirecting or deflecting to change the power dynamic to one they are more comfortable with, and one that empowers the deaf client to respond directly.

The final example I want to give revisits a reflection by Kendall. Kendall is in a health appointment with a nurse and a deaf patient. Kendall writes the following,

The whole concept was new to the patient, and the nurse did not have time to explain in full; she gave the patient a leaflet to look at which [the patient] cannot read. I felt the familiar temptation to act as advocate/add more information/give my opinion and struggled to withhold this. Thankfully I know that this patient accesses a drop-in service to see an interpreter for translation and can also see a support worker, so was able to remind her of this outside of the appointment. I have had other situations similar to this and have not given opinion but always feel it is an injustice to expect a person to go away with a leaflet they cannot understand and make a decision based on it. Usually I ask the medical practitioner to expand and take more time, which is generally more effective. However this appointment was already running late and I knew the nurse felt she had done as much as she could on this topic. (Kendall, Entry 2)

Kendall clearly wants to empower the deaf client in this appointment but has to balance the time pressure and the background knowledge that she is privy to about the patient. She tells us about the different strategies that she employs depending on the situation. She describes how she asks the practitioner to explain the treatment so that she can interpret that in the appointment if she is able to. She is prepared to use her own agency to ensure that the deaf patient is aware and educated about their treatment options. Kendall has developed a strategy (asking the practitioner to expand) which seems to sit comfortably with her understanding of professional norms because she is only interpreting the words of that practitioner rather than becoming a co-interlocutor or more visible in the interaction. However she chooses to go about this, her desire to empower the client is clear.

5.3.3 Non-Neutral Stance

Mason and Ren's (2012) non-neutral stance is seen in opposition to the principle of neutrality which is enshrined in many interpreting codes (Martin 2005). They say:

[a]ny behaviour, be it verbal or non-verbal, showing partiality toward either party in an exchange, tends to be judged as professional malpractice. To avoid this, interpreters are advised to remain detached throughout the process, not to convey attitude of their own to both parties, to adopt a strict or formal style in their behaviour (cf. Wadensjö 1998, p.240), or not to engage in unnecessary discussions with, or offer suggestions to, either party, or give opinions or judgments on anything, even if asked for. (Mason and Ren 2012, p.244)

As we have already seen in the preceding two sections SLIs do not abide by this prescribed ethic of interpreting, and in fact research has shown that it is a near impossible task (Metzger 1999). However, it reflects the conduit model of interpreting that, as we saw in section 5.2.1, is still a model that impacts on the thinking and reasoning of interpreters. I have therefore chosen to use this categorisation of actions as taking a *non-neutral stance* for analysing the narratives.

For the first example I would like to return to Alex's story of interpreting in a social work setting with a hearing professional, a deaf signer with additional needs, and a deaf signing support worker. She says:

I gave the deaf person cues, interrupted eye contact with them and used other strategies to let the professional come in. I was able to thank the support worker for their role in bringing the person back to the topic, and interrupt them when necessary. Afterwards, I realised that their rapport with the deaf person and the fact that they could address the person direct in their preferred language was also extremely helpful. (Alex, Entry 4, *italics mine*)

In this excerpt Alex describes the power dynamic that she is witness to. She sees how the meeting is playing out and determines that the deaf signing service-user is potentially trying to disrupt the aim of the meeting. This causes Alex to make some decisions about how she will act, and she tells us that she “interrupts eye contact” and uses “other strategies” to allow for more equal turn taking with the other professionals. Alex tells us that she is giving the deaf signer “cues” about turn taking, and I infer from this that she means she is using communication strategies that demonstrate that other people want to take their turn in the conversation. Averting eye gaze from a speaker to someone who is trying to contribute is one way of doing this. This eye gaze strategy is evidenced in a

study by Van Herreweghe (2002) to stop an interlocutor from taking the floor, she states, “eye gaze proved to be an extremely important and powerful regulator by which the current speaker selected the next speaker” (2002, p.98). This strategy is mentioned by two other SLIs in their reflections (Morgan, Entry 2; Corey, Entry 4). Morgan uses this strategy to essentially dissuade a hearing participant from talking directly to her, and Corey describes trying to curtail the lengthy contributions of a hard of hearing, speaking participant in a meeting by not giving him eye contact as well. In line with what Mason and Ren describe, “gaze behaviour can exert influence” (2012, p.247), they also describe it as the “body language of detachment” (ibid, p.248). The example from Alex could be judged to be a non-neutral stance taken by the SLI and has the potential to change the power dynamic in the meeting.

Another example of non-neutral stance is given by Darcy in an employment setting where a disciplinary meeting is taking place between a hearing human resources representative, a line manager of a deaf employee, the deaf employee, and their deaf advocate.

At the start of the meeting, the employers were quite black and white on their own procedures. The revealing of a sensitive issue seemingly made them tread more carefully, and a slight shift took place. After all facts were on the table, a bit of a battle ensued. There were quite a few instances of overlapping speech to deal with, where I had to make a decision on who to voice/sign. I initially favoured the Deaf man, as the more disempowered, but often the overlapping was between the advocate and the HR manager, and I did alternate between them, depending on the content, but then started to favour the manager, as her points were not being heard and the meeting would not move on without this, and as the manager in the room, I deemed it her right to dominate the meeting at that point. This did prove helpful. (Darcy, Entry 5)

Darcy shows transparency in this reflection about her evolving assessment of the power dynamics and her “favouring” of different participants at different times. This need to decide who to interpret and who to “give voice/sign” to is not something she can avoid because the overlapping discussion forces her into a position of interaction management. She eventually makes a decision, later in the interaction, to give the floor to the manager because she perceives that there is a need to progress towards an end point. She then finally aligns with the institutional power of the manager who has the “right to dominate”.

Although this is an example of Mason and Ren's *non-neutral stance*, there is a necessity for the SLI to manage the interaction because if she does not it will be impossible to interpret which forces her to make decisions about who can speak.

The next category of actions of agency by SLIs comes under both *acting as co-interlocutors* and *taking a non-neutral stance*. Mason and Ren (ibid) list the act of gatekeeping information (e.g. withholding information) as the act of a co-interlocutor and though I agree with this in principle the other parties are not always aware of the SLI's stance as a co-interlocutor. What SLIs do by acting as gatekeepers is take a non-neutral stance about the information they choose to divulge. In the following example Kendall describes how she gate-kept information from a deaf patient. Kendall is in a health appointment with a deaf patient and two nurses:

The patient was seemingly calm throughout, but it did feel uncomfortable - especially when the nurse said to me as an aside "the other nurse can poke about a lot more than we can - oh don't tell her that!!" I decided to relay that the other nurse was more experienced - judging that the patient was already rather anxious and it would not help her to think that she was about to be turned into a human pincushion. However I am aware that I used my hearing privilege to mediate the message, and they may not have worded it like that if she could hear them. (Kendall, Entry 2)

Aware that the nurse has said something that she would not have said if the interpreter were not present, Kendall adjusts the message of the nurse to match her understanding of the spirit of that message and the instruction that the nurse gives to not tell the deaf patient. Kendall is choosing to use her agency and therefore her power to align with the interactional goal rather than simply transfer everything she hears. Kendall judges herself to be using her "hearing privilege" from which I infer that she means her capacity to hear has privileged her because she is party to an aside that the deaf patient cannot hear. This makes her uncomfortable, and yet her ability to hear is a critical skill for her job as an interpreter. Is it the fact that other hearing people make asides to her that causes the discomfort rather than her ability to hear? This seems more likely. Nevertheless, this act of gatekeeping, of softening the impact of a message, shows Kendall actively using her power to make a professional judgement and deciding to withhold information.

In the following example, Darcy also gatekeeps an interaction in order to soften the impact of a deaf signing father's communication to teachers at his daughter's school.

His deaf signing wife is present as is his hearing daughter and the hearing teachers at the school:

[The] Deaf father clearly had set ideas and wanted to get them across to any teacher, no matter if they were offensive or not. Teachers have power of information behind them, but [are] also there to serve the parents. [The] Daughter clearly wanted to keep relations smooth between both parties (i.e. Dad don't embarrass me!). It felt like the father wanted to dominate the situation and take all power (possibly unconsciously). I felt the need to modify some of his language to make his assertions more sensitive to the feelings of the other person (i.e. 'I don't think this subject will be interesting'). Cultural mediation maybe? Sensitivity to the situation? But I was aware I was taking some control over that. I know him well and I know the family. I held in mind the aims of the situation as getting info for his daughter to make a decision, but knowing that he needs a continuing relationship with the teachers, as does the daughter. However, he has a right to embarrass his daughter?! Unconscious or conscious? (Darcy, Entry 1)

This reflection of Darcy's reveals a level of uncertainty about her motivations for modifying the language of the deaf father, which I discuss further in section 6.3.3. Darcy is clearly conscious that she did use her agency to do this and that modifying or softening the impact of the father's message is her intention. This is an example of taking a non-neutral stance because she is aware of the feelings of others and wants to be sensitive to them. She feels the deaf father is not being sensitive to this but predicts that he needs to sustain a good relationship with the teachers long-term. This judgement about him affects her interpreting and even though she cannot precisely pinpoint why she has done this she is aware that she has.

In a different reflection Corey also gatekeeps the message of a deaf client during a tense moment between a deaf professional and an English speaking hard of hearing client who is being assessed for equipment she might need. Corey explains, "I also tried to soften my voiceover but it was quite visible that offence had been made" (Corey, Entry 2). She pre-empts the potential for offence with a modification of the message (we do not know if it is tone, vocabulary, or withholding of segments).

In this section we have seen evidence of SLIs manifesting power by taking non-neutral stances in their interpreting. These manifestations can be provoked by the situation and interactional complications which require the SLI to make decisions about

who gets to speak, at other times the SLI chooses to adapt the messages being communicated in order perhaps to maintain rapport between interactants (for further information about rapport management and politeness see Mapson 2015). Further analysis of rationales are explored in section 6.1.

5.3.4 No Action Taken

Finally, in this section on techniques SLIs use for enacting agency I am going to briefly look at times when SLIs talk about not acting, whether deliberately, because they feel unable to, or because retrospectively they realise they could have changed something but they have written that they did not. This offers another side to the story of agency and shows how reflecting on action or inaction is a valuable tool for understanding power dynamics.

Kendall describes an emergency hospital appointment for a deaf signing patient in the intensive care unit, his deaf English-speaking and lipreading wife, the patient's hearing son and a hearing doctor. She is not briefed on the communication needs of all the participants before her arrival. She writes,

[The] Nurse (who arranged the interpreter and with whom I had liaised) [was] very grateful for my presence. [The] Doctor [was] also very amenable, no issues with power dynamics. However, the wife clearly did not understand the doctor. Realising she was deaf, I started to sign to her. Her son stopped me and said 'mum doesn't sign' at which point she started to apologise (in sign language) that she didn't sign 'properly' and started to tell me about growing up oral. Her spoken English was not very clear, and I started to voice a question she was asking the doctor, at which point the doctor looked at me and said 'I can understand her fine'. There was a very awkward moment when everyone looked at me, and I felt very uncomfortable with the accusatory look from the son (which may of course have been imagined by me) because I had 'interrupted' the conversation with the doctor.

I then started to say that I was happy to be used for communication between the wife or her husband and the medics but did not want to get in the way. I indicated for them to carry on, but wanted to tell the wife that I would repeat the doctors words if she wanted – however I didn't get a chance to say this as the son took over. It was obvious to me that the wife did not understand the medical

terminology, was very upset seeing her husband in ICU with all the tubes, but I felt unable to intervene.

I would have liked to have been introduced to the wife and step son on arrival, and have a chance to talk with the wife and explain my role. There was no opportunity to do this, as the doctor appeared the moment I stepped into the ward. The situation could have been markedly improved if I had been reassured that the wife was choosing not to use me for communication; it appeared that the decision was taken away from her by the son. (Kendall, Entry 1)

By not clarifying the communication needs of the participants in this interaction Kendall finds herself having to judge what is needed, which does not work well as the interaction progresses. Kendall writes in a very passive way “[t]he situation could have been markedly improved if I had been reassured [by whom?] that the wife was choosing not to use me for communication.” The question that could be asked here is: who could have clarified this for her? The wife of the deaf patient seems not to be empowered to manage her own communication needs. The son is described as taking over control and possibly ignoring his step-mother’s access requirements. Kendall is uncomfortable about all of this but feels unable to change the dynamic. She takes some action initially but then seems somewhat disempowered to do any more.

In another scenario that Darcy recounts where she is video relay interpreting for a council officer and a deaf service user she seems to be disempowered by the technological inefficiencies that have arisen:

They had clearly been having tech issues and were relieved that I was now on screen, but this confusion meant that the meeting started without me even knowing who was there/job title/reason for meeting. (Darcy, Entry 3)

Darcy does not ask for the information that she needs to be able to contextualise the meeting appropriately, putting her at a disadvantage and potentially making the meeting more problematic for the participants. She writes passively, in the same way that Kendall does, “the meeting started without me even knowing who was there/job title/reason for meeting” as though this is the responsibility of another person. The lack of knowledge is an issue but the gaining of that knowledge is not a responsibility she takes on in this reflection. She appears to be aversive to the role of co-interlocutor here.

Finally, we return to Darcy's reflection about the employment disciplinary meeting between a hearing manager and human resources representative and a deaf employee and his deaf advocate. Darcy recognises through her reflection what she might have done to improve the power dynamic,

The perception of my allegiance is something I find interesting in this booking. The Deaf man did not know me, and did not know the advocate had disclosed his situation to me prior to the meeting. I wonder how he perceived my allegiance, and how this affected his perception of the power dynamics in the room. If he saw me as 'with' the employer, then this will have likely increased their perceived power. I think the only thing I would have changed in this booking is to be more assertive in asking to speak to the employer in advance. This may have helped m[y] impartiality to be clearer from the start. Also, it would have been good to speak to the Deaf man in advance. (Darcy, Entry 5)

Being fully apprised of the context in which an SLI is working is a vital part of the preparation for doing the work well, for making professional decisions about turn-taking and for presenting oneself as a professional interpreter to each party involved. Darcy recognises here that if she had asked to speak with the employer and the deaf employee in a briefing before the meeting began she may have been more cognizant of the interactional goals of each participant and better able to make professional judgements.

These instances of *non-actions* show that sometimes SLIs lack agency. After some reflection, they may identify what agency they could have taken. However, some SLIs are not always able to see what other options they had for getting information that they needed.

This section of the results chapter has focused on the techniques of power, the actions that SLIs can choose to take and understand themselves to be taking which have an impact on power dynamics. Using Mason and Ren's (2012) categorisations I have shown that SLIs can act in different ways and have different impacts on the interactants.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen evidence of the language that SLIs use to discuss issues of power. The SLIs who participated in this research described their roles in interesting ways, which were rarely straightforward. The concepts of role and agency brought up references to the conduit model, being an active participant, aligning with or

empowering a client, allying, enabling and advocating. Some of them appeared to experience a conflict between their agency and the professional norms that they adhere to. I also examined the metaphors that were used by the SLIs when discussing power. The discourse is at times useful for constructing a concept of power within the interpreting profession, however I question whether the metaphors of power as balance and power as a commodity are adequate because they ignore the agency of the interpreter. This language sustains the belief that one can be powerless which allows for the divesting of responsibility.

I also focussed on the techniques of power that SLIs use during assignments. These techniques showed their capacity to act as co-interlocutors who manage power using their own agency. I also showed how they deliberately act in order to empower a client (usually the deaf signing client) to be autonomous or to have the opportunity to express themselves. I followed this by discussing how SLIs take a non-neutral stance when they feel discomfort or tension between clients, or because the situation imposes on them the need to make decisions about turn taking. Finally, I gave examples of non-actions to show the times when SLIs experience a lack of agency.

In the next chapter I will discuss in more detail the motivations for these decisions and examine how the stories SLIs recount about their professional practice reveal interesting perspectives about their understanding of power.

CHAPTER 6: Professional Responsibilities and Identities

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the analysis focussed on the language of power that SLIs use and the techniques of power that SLIs adopt to manage power dynamics. In this chapter I turn to focus on the research questions:

What rationales do SLIs offer for their action and techniques?

What traits are revealed through the stories SLIs tell about power dynamics in their practice?

I will look at how SLIs talk about themselves not only explicitly but also unconsciously through the stories they author. The reason for doing this, as I explained in chapter 4, is that hegemonic discourses or ideologies can be sustained in the language we use. What exists in the habitus, and is expressed in the language we use, can limit our ability to think in alternative ways.

I begin in section 6.2 by looking at the rationales that SLIs give for choosing particular actions. These rationales allow us to examine their perceptions of their professional responsibility for power dynamics. By exploring whether they have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities, I can also examine whether they have a clear sense of their own agency and purpose. I then follow on from that to analyse their stories through the lens of Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the 'oppressor traits' that Baker-Shenk (1986) identified within Freire's work, in section 6.3.1 to 6.3.4. This analysis interrogates the SLI's use of language and the ways in which they position themselves and their clients (hearing and deaf) within stories. Latterly, in sections 6.3.5 to 6.3.8, I will look at how SLIs also display what I will call 'partnering traits'. Freire's work gives us a different paradigm for thinking about working with oppressed groups. By using this new framework, I am able to look beyond the usual, common sense ways of talking about the practice of interpreting to find how the dominant discourses of the profession frame the way SLIs see their clients (hearing and deaf) and their own agency or lack of agency.

6.2 Rationales for Techniques of Power

In this section, I focus on how SLIs explain their actions and I look in detail at the rationales that they offer in their reflections for the interventions that they make during interpreted interactions. I begin by looking at the rationale of marginalization or disempowerment of the deaf client (6.2.1), followed by promoting the autonomy of the deaf client (6.2.2) and lastly their appeal to justice (6.2.3). Some reflections which are discussed in the previous chapter will be re-examined in this one through a different lens.

6.2.1 Rationale – Challenging Marginalization/Disempowerment of the Deaf Client

Four of the participants write about intervening in the interpreted interaction because of the marginalisation of the deaf signing client. In this first example we revisit a reflection by Alex who is interpreting in a health setting with a hearing health professional, a hearing support worker and a deaf signing patient with a learning disability. This time, however, I focus on the rationale given rather than the actions taken: interjecting by repeating questions to the deaf client and redirecting the conversation to focus back on the deaf client. Additionally, Alex requests permission to make a comment of her own to the hearing professional and support worker regarding appropriate resources that the deaf client requires. In her critical reflection Alex writes:

I felt I needed to act much more as an active participant and to advocate for the Deaf person who was becoming very marginalised.

I think there was a huge power imbalance in this situation, and that the professional's discomfort added to the difficult dynamics in this situation. I felt the need to advocate at times to make sure the Deaf person was enabled to be involved, as the professional was trying to engage, but felt more at ease doing so with the other hearing person, and was overlooking the needs of the Deaf person.

I now feel that interjecting and redirecting the conversation back to the deaf person was important in enabling them to take back some power, and to have a say in what was their meeting. They were eventually able to indicate activities that they would like to be involved in, and also to access future meetings with their support worker, and to indicate that they would like to have more information in future in a pictorial format accessible to them. The power dynamics were difficult, and I needed to act as an active participant, in advocating

for the deaf person, in a way I wouldn't do in a different interpreting situation.
(Alex, Entry 2)

This excerpt, which came in the critical reflection part of the journal, shows consistent reasoning. Alex is not ambivalent about her decisions. Working with a client who has a learning disability adds an extra layer of power dynamic as they can be considered a vulnerable adult. In this situation, the hearing health professional seems to be behaving in an exclusionary manner, which causes Alex to feel that the deaf client is being “sidelined” (Entry 2). This motivates her to intervene in very clear ways, discussed in section 5.2.4. She uses the word “enabling” to describe what she is doing for the deaf client. The overlapping of an interpreter and an advocate role seems to be occurring in this interaction, which is not surprising as this deaf service user is presented as being denied a voice by the hearing professional. Bahadir reports that the “dividing line between advocacy and interpreting is blurred” (2010, p.125) when (from the point of view of the interpreter) the people who are being interpreted for are either denied the right to speak or are incapable of asserting themselves (section 3.3.3).

A second example comes from Corey's reflection on an interpreted event at which there were seven people at a school meeting. There were two sets of interpreters at the meeting for each of the parents in attendance who had different interpreting needs. The parent that Corey is working for requires tactile interpreting¹⁴, which means that the client is deafblind. Corey tells us:

I had to shout out a few times that [the deafblind client] wanted to speak. It was poorly chaired, even though [the deafblind client] was putting her hand up to indicate she wanted to speak, it was not acknowledged.

I felt that by speaking out to indicate that my client wanted to speak, it again looked like I was all for [the deafblind client]. I noticed a look between [the other deaf client] and his social worker when I [had] done this...and it saddens me to think that any Deaf person would think that I acted in an inappropriate manner. If I had not made the choice to speak out, [the deafblind client] would have been

¹⁴ Tactile interpreting or deafblind manual interpreting involve signing whilst the recipient of the interpretation places their hands on the interpreter's hands, in order to sense the language physically as well as using any residual sight.

ignored and the conversation would have moved on without her views included.
(Corey, Entry 3)

Corey uses her agency to intervene on behalf of the deafblind client in an interpreted event so that she can make a contribution to the proceedings. Corey is clearly concerned about how this is seen by others. There is reference to whether others will consider her to be non-neutral in her professional role when she says, “it again looked like I was all for [the deafblind client]” or as though she behaved in an “inappropriate manner”. She may mean that she is being perceived as biased towards the deafblind signer in this assignment and that does not sit comfortably for her. It clearly concerns Corey to have to manifest her power in this way, but she does do it because otherwise the deafblind client she is working for will be marginalised and this is her rationale. This is the motivation she offers for intervening in ways that she clearly finds uncomfortable. Perhaps, once again, we see the conduit model of interpreting exerting its influence on Corey’s professional values, which are in conflict with her value of equality in turn taking.

Darcy offers us this insight into how she perceives an interaction between a teacher at a college and the deaf student in a class of eight students altogether. One of the eight students is the deaf signer’s sister:

The teacher clearly took a view on the Deaf man’s capabilities, and would sometimes ask me about him or his work when we were alone (break time etc.) and would also default to talking to his hearing sister about him rather than asking him questions directly. This felt very disempowering of the Deaf man. I chose to answer the questions by deflection to the Deaf man, or by giving advice based on “this is what a college should do for any Deaf student/this is what an adjustment might be for any Deaf student.” (Darcy, Entry 4)

Darcy acts in different ways to manage this situation. She is uncomfortable with the way the teacher is interacting with her and describes a couple of different strategies to manage it, either by giving generic responses rather than specific ones about the deaf student, or “by deflection” by which I understand that instead of answering directly, she asks the question to the deaf student directly, forcing his inclusion. This strategy was discussed in the previous chapter. Darcy refuses to collude in further disempowerment of the deaf student by not answering questions about him or his work but signposting a more

appropriate strategy that the teacher could take or by refusing to talk in specifics and pointing to more general principles on access for deaf students. The rationale that is given is that the teacher's actions disempowered the deaf student.

The last example comes from Eli, who interpreted in another educational setting for a deaf student and a teacher. Eli, having seen what she believes to be the deaf student's right to interpretation in her exam being taken away, takes the initiative and looks up an independent website to find out whether the student's rights are stated. She then shows these to the student and the student brings it up with the teacher:

At the first session I saw [the deaf student's] power being eroded by the tutor, so I decided to intervene by looking up her rights - a bit of power of my own here as I knew they existed and where to find them really quickly. [The deaf student] is not a person who will always challenge things, she was quite likely to take the view that the tutor was right no matter what.

Giving [the deaf student] the power to know that she did have a right to interpretation altered her demeanour. She thought it was okay to ask because it was her right. (Eli, Entry 3)

The reason Eli gives for this is the tutor's eroding of the student's power. She becomes an agent of power and explicitly tells me she is using "a bit of power of [her] own". Eli wants to empower the deaf student by giving her the knowledge that she needs to be able to ask for her right to access.

In the first example I gave the deaf client has learning disabilities, in the second example the client is deafblind, in the last two examples the deaf clients are students neither of whom are presented as being very assertive and are described as lacking background knowledge or knowledge about their rights. In each of these situations, the deaf signing client is judged to be vulnerable or voiceless by the SLI. These interpreters do not describe acting in these very visible ways in all of their reflections. It appears then that the intersection of characteristics that have the potential to increase vulnerability and belonging to a minority language group often triggers the SLI to use their agency to try to empower the client.

In a debrief interview with Alex, we discussed the guilt that interpreters can feel when power dynamics are in play more generally within community interpreting settings. She responded in the following way:

I think it [the guilt] comes from the fact that we are quite often not seen as professionals due to the fact that we work with a minority group whose language isn't recognised and whose language and culture aren't either recognised or respected. So, I think it comes from trying to redress the power issues and of course we are never going to be able to do that. But I think what we do do, which is REALLY powerful, is to give that person literally a voice... (Alex, debrief, 12:10)

Alex expresses a desire to make a difference in the power dynamics in favour of the deaf signer due to societal ignorance about BSL and deaf culture and audist behaviours. The presence of an SLI who can 'give voice' to the expressions of a deaf signer is in itself empowering, by her estimation. It is also notable that Alex conveys a sense of experiencing oppression herself because the profession of signed language interpreting is not fully recognised and because of the association with a marginalised minority.

In all of these excerpts we see how the SLIs appeal to the unfairness of the power dynamic, the marginalisation of the deaf client, or the stripping of power from the deaf client to legitimise their actions. These SLIs have chosen to ally with the subaltern deaf client in order to ensure that they are not excluded, ignored or disempowered. Rather than not acting and choosing to remain impartial (an expectation within the profession and discussed in section 3.4.1) they make a decision to take a stance of resistance, choosing to act on behalf of the disempowered. This resonates with what Bahadir describes when she says:

The interpreters who feel uneasy vis-a-vis the absorption into intricate mechanisms of oppression and discrimination must either resign or act. Those who act take a stance, and take on the burden of their articulations. Because interpreters are not panes of glass or photocopy machines, they must at some point break with the ideal of the body-less voice. Acting as the voice of the voice-less is the first step towards becoming aware of one's own voice. (Bahadir 2010, p. 132)

These actions disrupt the interactions in different ways, potentially creating Inghilleri's (2005) zone of uncertainty (see section 3.3.3) and offering a "liberatory space" (2005,

p.72) in which all interactants can potentially choose to be more inclusive or recognise their oppressive behaviours.

6.2.2 Rationale - Promoting Autonomy of the Deaf Client

The first example of promoting autonomy is presented by Bailey as she describes a conference that two deaf signers were attending; one man and one woman. Initially, the deaf woman had complained about the fact that two interpreters were booked instead of one because she did not think this was necessary. This is something that Bailey is unhappy about because reasonable working conditions generally dictate that two SLIs should be booked for conference work over long hours, and prior to the booking she makes every effort to find a co-worker. Later on, Bailey has to discuss with the two participants which workshops they want to attend and they choose different workshops. Bailey writes:

In workshops, I was paired with [the] deaf lady. I deferred to her and asked her ‘are you happy for me to interpret your workshop?’ She said she was. Because she had seemed so strident before I wanted to make sure she was happy instead of deciding for her. (Bailey, Entry 1)

This example shows Bailey’s desire to confirm that the deaf woman is happy to have her as her interpreter. There is, I suspect, a desire to keep a good reputation with this client that prompts this checking, however, by checking with her on her choice of interpreter she is promoting autonomy with this deaf client.

In this following excerpt Francis describes a situation in a doctor’s office with a deaf signing patient and their signing support worker from their school. Francis writes about two meetings in fact: the first one is an initial consultation and the second is an assessment with another health professional on a different day. Francis describes several instances where she transparently offers information to the deaf client to ensure that they are aware of their choices, or of key information that may impact on them in order to promote their autonomy. In the first appointment the doctor is referring the patient and has had to telephone a colleague to set up the referral:

As the call progressed, it became clear that the response service were getting confused about the need for an interpreter and how to engage with one (through my service). The doctor was also being asked to repeat some previously given

details. The Deaf patient quickly picked up on this and turned to the staff member to ask ‘why are they asking the same things? why is the doctor repeating everything?’. A side exchange began between them and the patient’s attention shifted away from the call. At that point, I heard the doctor say ‘well, they can always come with a staff member from the school to interpret if you can’t get one (an interpreter)’. Here, I decided to interrupt the conversation between staff member and patient to get her attention and repeat what the doctor had suggested. *I did this because I wanted to give the patient the opportunity to respond directly,* before I made my own representations on the issue. The phone is disempowering to Deaf people, even with an interpreter available, for many reasons. Here, already 30 minutes into the appointment, the patient had shifted their attention away from the call, because it was both boring and causing some frustration (the repetition) yet a crucial element of the follow-up appointment to come was being decided...

I was pleased with how the appointment went. It was a long wait and a long appointment with a patient I had never met before. The doctor listened to ‘their story’ and chose a typical referral route. That referral route became ‘more difficult’ as the people were not present in the same room and it required a phone call from the GP. To add more difficulty the rapid response service were unsure about making arrangements for an interpreter and were likely to take the advice (and an easy option, without financial cost) that a staff member from the school could interpret for the patient. This would have been entirely inappropriate. *I was pleased that my decision(s) empowered the patient to make her own representations on the issue and that they were respected. (Francis, Entry 5, italics mine)*

Francis states her intention of wanting to empower the deaf client by ensuring that they understand what is occurring in a phone conversation in which a doctor is suggesting that a staff member (not an interpreter) is used for communication purposes. Francis recognises that this would disempower the deaf client and ensures that she is apprised of this information so that she has the opportunity to express her own concerns, if she has any. In this way Francis promotes the autonomy of the client before making any intervention of her own.

In the second appointment, the next day, Francis includes further actions that she takes to ensure that this autonomy is forefront:

When we met in the waiting area, I said a few things that I hadn't raised at the first appointment: reminders about confidentiality and her choice if she wanted another interpreter for sessions after the initial assessment. I liked her responses, which almost cut me short and were along the lines of: 'Of course, I know that, why are you telling me?!'. To which I replied, 'some people don't know and I need to tell them but you know already and that's good'...

The Deaf person returned [from the bathroom] and the staff member asked about who would go into the room; they were leaning towards not going in. The Deaf person said they felt bad that the staff member had driven them all the way there and was suggesting they wait in the reception area. The staff member said that it would be fine for them to do this. The Deaf person hesitated. I sensed that they would rather not have the staff member with them but they still felt guilty about them having to wait alone. The staff member said again that they would be fine and that the patient would have me with them to talk with the assessor. The Deaf person looked to me at this point. I started by saying, 'it's your choice' and suggested that the staff member's idea was a good one and that in my experience Deaf (young) people can start an appointment by themselves but can call on a staff member to join them at any point if that's what they want; we could talk about that with the assessor before we begin and make an arrangement. The Deaf person quickly replied, with relief, to say 'you stay here' to the staff member. For me, this supported a 'good assessment' opportunity, where the Deaf person could speak freely. (Francis, Entry 5)

Once again, we see two instances where Francis promotes autonomy with this young deaf person. She is clear about her professional ethics around confidentiality, but also about the deaf person's right to have a different interpreter if she wanted. Finally, when the young deaf person looks to her for advice or comment, she begins by saying "it's your choice". She then follows up with a suggestion based on her experience of these types of appointments, which leaves room for the deaf person to change their mind at any point, but also encourages them to follow their instinct, as Francis sees it, to go into the appointment independently. I could interpret this advice-giving as exerting agency which

is uncalled for. However, Francis could have refused to respond, or left it at 'it's your choice'. Yet, her response supports autonomy and leaves open the opportunity to change her mind. We know from Freire's work that this approach supports the empowerment of the oppressed individual. Freire writes, "Respect for the autonomy and dignity of every person is an ethical imperative and not a favour that we may or may not concede to each other" (Freire 1998, p.59). Francis does not assume the young deaf signer knows her rights, as a user of an interpreter service, and makes clear what choices the young deaf person has at different points throughout the interactions. Francis does not make decisions for the deaf signer and does ensure an opportunity for her to assert her right to an interpreter at an important moment in the interpreted interaction. This is an example of a negotiation of agency, in which the SLI seems to be promoting autonomy.

In this last example, from Alex's debrief interview, there is a moment when Alex is describing how she has developed her practice over time and explains how she no longer feels that she has the sole responsibility for making everything in a communication clear, particularly to the deaf client. Alex describes the strategy she sometimes uses for promoting autonomy with deaf clients, in particular, where instead of clarifying immediately if she sees that a client does not understand something, she will ask the client if they want to clarify further themselves. Where previously she might have handled this herself, taking control of the situation and asking for elaboration or clarification, she now stops and offers that control to the client more often. She says:

I think I'm also aware more, now, that sometimes it's not a lack of understanding. Or ... you know sometimes when people say, 'I'm not sure whether this person has got [understood] that'. I feel like I'm more in a position now to judge that, and say 'well, why don't you go back and give that power back as well'. I'm more in a position to do that. That really helps. Rather than 'it's down to me', I have to clarify or, you know, do something. I don't do that all the time now. 'This is what I've got, would you like to elaborate, would you like to clarify you know, to make this work for you?' (Alex, debrief 21:35)

This is a clear example of Freire's insistence on dialogue between oppressed peoples and those from the oppressing class who want to see liberation of the oppressed. Freire talks about this need for a "horizontal relationship" (1980, p.72) in which mutual trust is negotiated and the ally or partner of the oppressed person continues to believe in their capacity to accept their agency. Alex, who once used her agency to make decisions on

behalf of deaf clients about their understanding of a communication, now increasingly negotiates with the client opportunities for them to use their agency if they desire to.

6.2.3 Rationale - An Appeal to Justice

SLIs sometimes appeal to their need to redress an imbalance that they perceive and give this as a justification for choosing to take action in some way. This excerpt is from a reflection by Bailey who interpreted for a deaf service-user and a nurse assessor at a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Assessment Centre. The excerpt here comes after a description of how she added information to an interpretation because she felt that the deaf service-user was making light of her needs as a disabled and deaf person in receipt of disability benefits. Bailey is conflicted and worries about her responsibility in this meeting. She states, “My worry was that she will have her benefits cut, because she was saying ‘Oh, I can do all the housework’. But what could I do? I couldn’t exactly lie and say ‘I struggle every day’ when [the deaf service-user] was saying the opposite” (Bailey, Entry 4). This dilemma about “unpacking” information, as she calls it, so that the nurse assessor will have some insight into this client’s life causes Bailey to reflect:

On reflection I do feel uncomfortable. I perhaps should have interjected as a ‘professional’ and explained to the assessor about some of the information [the deaf service-user] had shared in the waiting room, or generally the barriers Deaf people face. But I didn’t. I did add/unpack where I could, but I am left feeling that I did [the deaf service-user] a bit of a disservice. She literally didn’t make a big deal about being Deaf or her other health issues. But perhaps I should have supported her more. (Bailey, Entry 4)

Bailey clearly does feel the deaf client has misunderstood the aim of one of these types of interviews. She could choose to do nothing other than interpret what the deaf service-user is saying but she does not even mention this option in her reflection. She feels an obligation to the deaf service-user to ensure that the meeting outcome is in her favour and that her benefits will not be cut. In fact, more than this, she uses the term “disservice” so she actually believes that she has failed in some aspect of her professional responsibilities. This strength of feeling about the potentially negative consequences of this assessment is weighing on Bailey’s mind. She seems to be experiencing some conflict between her perceived responsibilities as a SLI and the desire to advocate for this deaf signer, because she may have her benefits cut. One of her potential solutions for a future event similar to

this is to intervene as a professional and explain the barriers deaf people face. By “barriers” I assume she is referring to audist attitudes (see section 2.4.1). Whether we judge Bailey’s choice of actions or suggested actions to be appropriate or not, the motivation behind these appears to be social justice for the deaf service-user. Bailey does not want to see the client impacted by this failure to understand the process, or by the process itself, which from Bailey’s point of view risks undermining the client. This example is not straightforward because it could be interpreted as exhibiting oppressor traits (see the following section 6.3). Bailey’s “unpacking” of the information and adding of information can be interpreted as oppressive behaviour because the deaf signer is not attempting to say anything further and to add information without being transparent about it shows a distrust of the deaf woman’s capabilities. The rationale given, however, reveals a perception about the responsibility that an SLI has towards a client like this, who may be making themselves vulnerable because they have not fully understood the aim of the meeting. There appear to be different values competing here and Bailey is struggling to find the best way to manage this complex situation in a way that offers closure.

In the following excerpt I re-examine Darcy’s assignment with a deaf adult student and teacher in a class of eight students, looking for her rationale. Darcy is reflecting on the whole event:

I found the whole situation very challenging. I constantly questioned my own role in empowering the Deaf student, and the most appropriate way to do this. I also had to recognise the limits of my own role in the ‘success’ of the student (i.e. him passing the exams). I think I feel like I did not do enough to try and redress some of the power imbalance through education of the teacher and making sure I wasn’t complicit in any disempowerment of the Deaf man. My inner sense of injustice was often angered at the situation and the outcomes. (Darcy, Entry 4)

Darcy feels that she has not done enough to improve the power dynamics. She hints at the possibility that she could have educated the teacher more, and that she could have avoided being complicit in disempowerment of the student, though the details of this are not given. Darcy sees this need to redress the imbalance as part of her goal in the interaction; she appears to consider this to be her responsibility to some degree. Another driver for her behaviours in this excerpt is Darcy’s “inner sense of injustice” which has been offended. There is something about this situation that angers her, which she does

not elaborate on. We can infer that the treatment of the deaf student by the teacher is causing this because Darcy tells us earlier in the reflection that the teacher has asked her and the student's sibling questions about the student during breaks without his knowledge. This sits uncomfortably with Darcy and she finds it difficult to manage. She also notes at the end of her reflection:

However, one challenge was that the Deaf man was not very capable in stating what he wanted, or knowing what he needed, or even understanding all of the course content, due to his lack of background knowledge (that seemed to me in part because of poor education and language barriers in everyday life). It was therefore difficult to try and empower him, as he could not stand up for himself well, which left me trying to stand up for him on his behalf, but whilst also not alienating or undermining the teacher.

Another option I could have taken was to pass on every single comment or question from the Deaf man, to the teacher. However, this would have been really disruptive to the class, and also resulted in even less being learned (in my opinion).

I feel my choices were justified, and if I repeated this situation, I would probably feel forced to do something similar, but with slight alterations. The situation was difficult and I recognise that many of the factors were out of my control, but that still leaves me with an unsatisfied sort of feeling!" (Darcy, Entry 4)

Darcy is recognising the systemic discrimination that this student has experienced through audism. Educational practices are alluded to as well as the lack of linguistic access to 'everyday life' as causes of this deaf student's lack of contextual knowledge (here we might infer a deficit in the deaf man's fund-of-information, see section 2.4.3). This inequality positions the deaf student as an oppressed minority, lacking the power to assert his own rights. The teacher does not understand this foundational information and it appears from Darcy's comments, that the teacher has judged his capabilities to be minimal. Darcy is struggling with what agency she can use to equalise the imbalance of power, whilst, at the same time, not 'alienating' the teacher. It is unclear as to how the teacher would feel alienated by Darcy's attempts to empower the deaf man, but perhaps Darcy felt that the teacher would perceive any advice or suggestions as a threat to her

authority. Her description of another tactic that she could have used, to “pass on” all communications by the deaf student (harking back to the conduit model of interpreting, see section 3.4.1) seems to her to be an impractical and disruptive strategy especially as she takes into account the needs of the other students in the class. The structural inequality of the student’s lack of knowledge cannot be resolved in an instant by anything Darcy attempts. Nevertheless, Darcy wants to ‘empower’ the student. This is troubling to her and leaves her with an ‘unsatisfied’ feeling.

In the next excerpt from Kendall’s reflections, a deaf patient is being treated by a nurse. I reanalyse this excerpt for Kendall’s rationales. This deaf woman has come from another country and Kendall is aware that she has had little access to health education and general health knowledge. They are discussing a particular medical treatment:

The whole concept was new to the patient, and the nurse did not have time to explain in full; she gave the patient a leaflet to look at which she cannot read.

I felt the familiar temptation to act as advocate/add more information/give my opinion and struggled to withhold this. Thankfully I know that this patient accesses a drop-in service to see an interpreter for translation and can also see a support worker, so was able to remind her of this outside of the appointment. I have had other situations similar to this and have not given opinion *but always feel it is an injustice to expect a person to go away with a leaflet they cannot understand and make a decision based on it*. Usually I ask the medical practitioner to expand and take more time, which is generally more effective. However this appointment was already running late and I knew the nurse felt she had done as much as she could on this topic. (Kendall, Entry 2, italics mine)

Kendall reveals her sense of “injustice” at the expectation that the deaf client will be able to read an English leaflet. This common assumption by hearing people causes difficulties when, on average, literacy levels of deaf and hard of hearing learners worldwide are poor (Young, Squires, Oram, Sutherland, & Hartley, 2015). Additionally, this deaf signer is not from the UK originally, therefore their English literacy skills could be non-existent. Kendall also reveals that she feels tempted to act as an advocate or add information that has not been offered or even give her own opinion in this situation. This desire to empower the deaf client is a common experience for her but she also shows a reluctance to act in this way. This reluctance is not explained clearly but she tells us she struggles

not to make any of these interventions. This could be the conduit model of interpreting guiding her actions. The only reason given is that time did not permit this but that she would “usually” request that the medical practitioner explain further. Through this story we can see the motivational pull to mitigate perceived injustices and, seemingly, a professional norm that reins in this drive at times. As mediators of language SLIs are also mediators of contextual knowledge between hearing and deaf experiences, this knowledge is power that can be used to benefit either party or none. Depending on an individual SLI’s values (both professional and personal) and the context in which the SLI is working, using this power to educate hearing professionals and consequently to empower deaf signers or to remain mechanistic is always a choice. Although I have suggested that an appeal to justice is the rationale in this excerpt it is only one among other rationales that Kendall is juggling.

Morgan also talks about social justice in her debrief interview. When asked about the ideal dynamic in an interpreting assignment she responds by saying:

I think for me it is about when there’s equality in the room and there’s that kind of social equality ...I do have a real strong sense of social justice and that’s kind of why I think I do what I do and why I’m in this job and it’s.. the political side of it, I’m not a big politician but I am quite political in terms of social justice, so for when I see equality in the room and then people are having a great discussion and I can, what I sometimes say, [inverted air quotes] just interpret. (Morgan, debrief 18:34)

What stands out in this excerpt is that Morgan identifies social justice as being one of her drivers for doing the job of interpreting. When Morgan perceives the power dynamic to be equalised she can focus more on the communication aspect of the interaction, rather than handling imbalances. This theme comes up time and again with all the interpreters. Dealing with imbalances and injustice is something all of the SLIs said they would prefer not to have to do, but evidence from this study shows that they are regularly compelled to do something about it.

In this section about the rationales that SLIs give for using their techniques of power I have shown evidence of conflicting professional norms. SLIs appeal to a value of neutrality and in the same instance to a value of social justice that requires them to take a non-neutral stance. In the next section I use a theoretical frame which allows me to

further explore embedded values that are not always consciously expressed. This exploration offers an opportunity to analyse the habituses of SLIs.

6.3 Oppressor Traits and Partnering Traits

We tell and retell the stories of our lives differently according to our audience, our recollection and our insight; thus, stories become shaped by time and space and understanding, and the telling of stories can, in turn, be the vehicle of our understanding. But for this process to follow through to its collective potential, personal stories need to be set within a theoretical analysis that offers critical insight for action.” (Ledwith 1997, p.62)

Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* describes the behaviours and ‘traits’ of the oppressing majority (see section 2.5.2). I explore the ways in which SLIs revealed aspects of oppressor characteristics in their narratives. I do this by pinpointing language that reveals different types of attitudes. In Baker-Shenk’s (1986) article, which draws on Freire’s work, she lists the characteristics of oppressors (see section 3.4.3). I analysed the reflections looking for these characteristics that include: a possessive consciousness towards the minority group; a paternalistic view that sees the minority group as misguided and infantile or in need of ‘help’ so that they control or ‘take charge’; a desire for approval and gratitude from the minority group; anger when the oppressed group want liberation, which connects to the concept of hearing fragility (see section 2.3.5); and a pejorative view of the minority (seeing them as incompetent and incapable). Where I have identified these traits within the stories told by the participants I have given the example, usually in a longer extract following narrative inquiry conventions, so that the reader can see the context in which these traits are revealed. I then discuss my interpretation of their stories with this Freirean lens. I give critical insight into the ways in which some SLIs choose to frame their work, their clients and themselves.

As a counterbalance to this, in the second part of this chapter, I focus on what I have termed ‘partnering traits’, also inspired by Freire’s work (see section 2.5.2). This involved looking for stories that show a desire to partner with the oppressed minority. Traits of partners include: showing solidarity with deaf people; showing a desire to transform unjust systems; promoting independence and equality; promoting a horizontal relationship with deaf clients; and transparency and accountability. I follow the same pattern and use excerpts of stories written by the participants which I then analyse using

this lens. The benefit of this analysis is that it allows the researcher to sift through conflicting constructs of the interpreters' self-representations, which reveal the complexity and nuance within their accounts. Although I have applied a comparative approach I will focus on individual stories to bring out the diversity of expressions within the group.

6.3.1 Oppressor Traits – Possessive Consciousness

This inquiry began using a technique from critical discourse analysis where I searched for the use of possessive pronouns alongside the words 'client', 'service-user', 'patient' and other variants. Four of the participants (Bailey, Corey, Eli and Taylor) in the reflective journal study used the terminology 'my client' when talking about the deaf BSL user that they were working with. Notably they do not refer to the hearing client in this way. Other participants simply refer to clients as 'the client', 'the deaf client', 'the Deafblind client', 'the hearing client' or 'the patient/client' (in healthcare settings). In the majority of cases, where the hearing client is the professional offering a service to the deaf service-user, the hearing client is referred to by their profession: clinician, doctor, audiologist, social worker etc.

In the small number of instances when the deaf client had institutional power there are differing references including, 'Deaf employee', 'Deaf guy' and 'my Deaf guy' (Bailey, Entry 2). In another entry Bailey uses 'Deaf guy', 'Deaf person' (without the definitive article) and the use of the initial of the deaf person's name (in order to maintain confidentiality), revealing perhaps a discomfort with continuing to refer to this person as 'Deaf guy' and showing the relationship that Bailey has with this regular client (Bailey, Entry 3). Others refer to the deaf professionals as 'Deaf members of staff' (Taylor, Entry 12) 'a trainee consultant', 'the deaf individual', 'a deaf consultant' (Taylor, Entry 5), 'Assessor - Employee of Deaf Organisation, Male Deaf BSL user' followed by '*****' instead of the client's name because of confidentiality, and the SLI explains that she has worked with this client for seven years and knows them well (Corey, Entry 2). Jamie refers to deaf clients as 'Deaf Welfare Rights Workers' giving them their professional titles and then shortens this to WRWs for the rest of the reflection (Entry 3).

Finding conventions that sit comfortably with the SLIs for referring to the deaf clients they work with is sometimes problematic in their reflections and seems to expose a tension for some SLIs. There are several reasons that could be posited for this indication of ownership of the deaf client with the use of 'my'. Firstly, interpreter booking systems are diverse and though I cannot verify whether SLIs were booked directly or through an

agency it is worth pointing out that the apparatus for booking an interpreter can emphasise that only the deaf person is the client requiring the service. This emphasis can occur either because the SLI was booked directly by a deaf client, or because the agency booked the SLI in conjunction with the deaf client's name but with less information about the hearing client. SLIs may feel that 'their client' is the deaf client as a result of the system, even though the hearing client needs the service too. If the deaf client books an interpreter directly, for example, the SLI may think of them as 'my client'. Deaf professionals will often book their own interpreters and this might influence the interpreter's perception that the deaf person is their client, rather than the hearing person.

Secondly, in society more broadly, to refer to a client as 'my client', particularly in legal settings, is common practice, however this usually suggests that there is only one client being indicated and in interpreting practice there must be two clients for an interpreter to be required. Therefore, there is a need to question why there is a tendency to refer only to the deaf client as belonging to the interpreter.

Thirdly, another interpretation of this use of 'my' is the prior relationship with the deaf person. SLIs often work with the same deaf client on a regular basis but with different hearing clients with whom they have no prior relationship. Therefore, this use of 'my' may indicate the familiarity that the SLI has with 'their' client.

An alternative interpretation of this use of 'my', and one which becomes more troubling in the light of Freire and Baker-Shenk's work, is that this could be seen as evidence of unconscious oppressor traits. It may reveal the perspective of an oppressor who sees people as objects of domination or sees oppressed people as objects of charity or welfare that need to be taken care of by the SLI (Freire, 1970). If SLIs perceive their deaf clients in these terms they could be maintaining audist attitudes towards deaf people. By referring to them in this way, unconsciously or not, they are indicating ownership of the deaf client. If they use this possessive language to refer to deaf clients with hearing clients, they are in danger of sustaining the framing of deaf clients as requiring help, charity or special treatment. This maintains audist attitudes and practices among hearing people. There is an opportunity in these environments to disrupt the *status quo* and strategically use the 'zone of uncertainty' (Inghilleri, 2005) to challenge the audist assumptions by refraining from referring to deaf clients as 'my client'.

6.3.2 Oppressor Traits – Pejorative and Paternalistic Attitudes

In the following reflection a deaf trainer is teaching disability awareness to hearing participants and the SLI, Bailey, reflects on the power dynamics. In the quote below we see the judgement of the SLI about the attitude of the deaf trainer:

This particular group was interesting and challenging because it was a small group of 7 people and two of the group had learning disabilities, and as a group they were quite quiet and reserved. Some of the subject matter was a bit above the level of the group and I was working hard to unpack the information a bit more. I sometimes feel that [initial of deaf person's name] misses stuff out because he is bored/tired/being lazy/sick of saying it. Because he lipreads really well, it can be a challenge to balance only voicing over what he says versus adding information. (Bailey, Entry 3)

There is a pejorative tone to this reflection because the SLI judges the trainer to be “bored/tired/being lazy/sick of saying it” and therefore adds and unpacks the information, without consultation with the trainer. This resonates directly with Freire’s work when he talks about the tendency of the oppressors to consider the minority lazy and incompetent (1970, p. 41). It is of course the trainer’s prerogative if they choose not to give information but, in this instance, the SLI deems this a disservice to the participants, which can be interpreted as lacking the belief that the deaf client can do his job or the willingness to allow the deaf client to do badly. Additionally, from this description we are given the impression that the SLI is doing something surreptitious in adding information because she does not want the client to know about it. This lack of transparency shows a distrust of the trainer in this instance. The other side to this narrative is that at the end of the entire reflection the SLI states, “I’m now reflecting that maybe I should talk to him about the interpreting process” (Bailey, Entry 3), revealing some critical awareness and sense of responsibility. In the debrief interview I brought up the lack of transparency in this particular reflection and Bailey responded that she ought to have a conversation with this client and be clear about how she is approaching the interpreting.

The following example, which was used in section 6.2.3 to look at rationales, is re-examined here in order to uncover deeper insights about underlying attitudes. Darcy describes interpreting for a hearing teacher in an adult education college environment with one deaf signing student and eight hearing students. She writes:

However, one challenge was that the Deaf man was not very capable in stating what he wanted, or knowing what he needed, or even understanding all of the course content, due to his lack of background knowledge (that seemed to me in part because of poor education and language barriers in everyday life). It was therefore difficult to try and empower him, as he could not stand up for himself well, which left me trying to stand up for him on his behalf, but whilst also not alienating or undermining the teacher. (Darcy, Entry 4)

It would not be unreasonable to interpret Darcy's evaluation of the signing man's educational background as a result of audist educational practices. Darcy tells us that it was difficult to try to empower him though we do not know what strategies were tried. The lack of background information about strategies she tried makes it difficult to judge whether Darcy's decision to "stand up for him" herself was her only recourse. We cannot know from this description; however, I do want to question whether an assumption was made about this man's capacity for learning how to be more assertive. It would be interesting to examine whether there were other partnering options in this scenario that would allow for the promotion of autonomy of the deaf student. This brings up another trait that Freire discusses which is the encouraging of passivity in the oppressed group (Freire 1970). Encouraging passivity is considered to be a paternalistic attitude. Making a decision to stand up for someone else assumes a judgment that that other person is incapable of making autonomous decisions.

Although evidence for pejorative traits was scant, I thought it an important trait to examine, because carrying assumptions about a deaf signer's limited capacities has the potential to be harmful to those clients. It may also lead to the further assumption being made that when someone is disempowered they cannot learn to be empowered. Embedded beliefs can surface in the ways that SLIs speak about their work and their expectations of people and whilst the client-base of SLIs is often diverse in terms of the educational background of a signing client, employing language that assumes deficiency can sustain pejorative stereotypes. Pejorative attitudes are often intertwined with paternalistic attitudes because of the underlying assumption that deaf signers cannot handle imbalances in power dynamics by themselves. This resonates with Lane's description of a hearing ethnocentric perspective of deaf people that assumes inferiority (1992) (see section 2.4.1). Therefore, the rationale follows, deaf signers require charitable acts by well-meaning people to save them from their situation which sustains an audist approach and maintains the *mask of benevolence* (the title of Lane's book 1992).

An example of paternalistic narration comes from a situation where the SLI is working in a social work context with an independent reviewing officer (IRO)¹⁵, a social worker, and two deaf clients. Notably we can see the use of the possessive phrase “my clients”, discussed earlier, in relation to the deaf clients, in this narrative:

[The IRO] has let her perceived power go to her head, to which scores of social workers will attest. You merely need to mention the name [of the IRO] and people shy away. Seriously.

People don't seem to stand up to [the IRO] when she is in the wrong and so she can continue to be a bully. I am not going to let her bully me and *my clients* any longer. I think she has gathered now that both the social worker and me are happy to stand up to her – we are also the ones who have found her out, and she knows that.

I tried, but largely failed, to use my power *to make things as good as possible for* [the two deaf clients] *without letting them know of the difficulties* before and during the initial conference, but [one deaf client] is particularly astute and had gathered [the IRO] was not as nice as she was attempting to portray to him. On two occasions he has completely shocked [the IRO] by things he has said to her, demonstrating his power. I think she has now realised that it isn't actually me saying them.

My power has been limited but by continuing to stand my ground, *stand up for* [the two deaf clients] and enlisting the support of the social worker we are getting there. When other professionals are quaking at even being in the room with [the IRO], it has not been easy. (Eli, Entry 4, *italics mine*)

¹⁵ “Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) are social workers, who are also experienced social work managers whose duty is to ensure the care plans for children in care are legally compliant and in the child's best interest.” (NAIRO, 2017)

The IRO in this story is the enemy of the piece. The IRO's attitude and treatment of the interpreter are described so that the reader will dislike her and see her as obstructing smooth passage through this social work process. Eli writes about using her own power to "make things as good as possible.. Without letting [the deaf clients] know of the difficulties..." that occur with this IRO, which suggests that she thinks this is an admirable thing to do. There is a stated desire throughout this story to ally with the deaf clients against this IRO, yet in displaying this desire the attitude is not one of partnership, in which the SLI shares their understanding of the situation with the clients. Instead, Eli takes on the role of a 'rescuer'. Freire classes this desire to save the oppressed without their cooperation or "reflective participation" (1970, p.47) within the oppressive traits category. Use of the phrase "stand up for (the two deaf clients)" is another example of this. Eli positions herself as a barrier between the deaf clients and the perceived bully that is the IRO, attempting to shield them from her. Once again, we see this non-transparent, non-partnering stance where the SLI is rescuing the deaf clients from the 'bad' hearing client. This is made more interesting in this narrative of Eli's because she emphasizes that one of the deaf signers is "particularly astute". This paternalistic attitude, which may come from a place of genuine concern for the deaf clients and a sense of social justice, can serve to diminish the deaf clients' capacity to completely comprehend the situation that they are in, however difficult and unsatisfactory, in order to make decisions about how to manage it.

6.3.3 Oppressor Traits – Hearing Fragility Defence Mechanisms

Hearing fragility was discussed in the Literature Review (section 2.3.5) and refers to the defence mechanisms that hearing people employ to neutralise discomfort that they are experiencing when their worldview about deaf people's lives is challenged. The following reflection by Corey is about an equipment assessment where the assessor is a deaf person and the service user is a hard of hearing (HoH) person. In this example we see the impact of an interpreter's own discomfort at the reaction of the HoH person who is being educated and enlightened about being Deaf. This discomfort causes Corey, the SLI, to intervene in the interpretation:

The assessment began and the client interrupted to ask me if the assessor was born Deaf. I interpreted the question to the Deaf person who then explained that he became Deaf as a child through glue ear. Again the head shaking and feeling

sorry for him. I know *my client* well and know [they] detest this patronising attitude but understands it's usually a lack of knowledge.

[The deaf assessor] was becoming agitated as we were slightly against the clock and had someone waiting to be assessed so really needed to just do the assessment and send the lady on her way.

[The deaf assessor] then explained that it's actually a lot worse for HoH people as they have completely lost their ability to communicate, can become completely isolated from friends/family whilst [the deaf assessor] has a family and community who can also sign and therefore has a very happy and fulfilling life and feels sorry for hard of hearing people (although they often think it's the other way round and expect Deaf people to struggle more).

My client was becoming quite angry at the patronising attitude and whilst I was voicing over, *I quickly signed to him that she just wouldn't realise, you know what it's like, lack of Deaf awareness etc (with a wink)*. This seemed to calm the situation before it ended up that the HoH person felt insulted. *I stepped out of my traditional role as interpreter as could see that things were quickly escalating* and could see that although it does come across as cheeky, it usually is lack of knowledge.

I also tried to soften my voiceover but it was quite visible that offence had been made.

The HoH client left with her tail between her legs and shook my hand and not [the deaf assessor's]. Some recognition on her part that she had offended him but equally that perhaps I was on her side.

I could see that my client was slightly flustered but the same situation has cropped up again and again and can see [the client] takes it a personal insult when someone so clearly feels sorry for [him]. (Corey, Entry 2, *italics mine*)

The SLI recognises the discomfort of this situation and empathises with the HoH client who has no knowledge about life for a deaf signer. By intervening in this way, Corey is

trying to stop the deaf assessor from saying any more to upset the service user. Though Corey recognises the service user is being patronising and that the deaf professional is having a difficult time with this and has chosen to educate the service user on the topic, Corey judges that the assessor has gone too far and intervenes. Corey describes the attitude of the hard-of-hearing service-user as “cheeky” in the reflection, which is an attempt at making light of the offence being caused. There are conflicting perspectives expressed in this account, both of allying with the deaf professional, particularly with the knowing “wink”, but simultaneously convincing them to stop explaining any more. The service-user’s worldview is being challenged by the deaf professional which is causing significant discomfort. One could argue that this type of intervention could be motivated by hearing fragility; the lack of ability to tolerate the discomfort of this type of charged encounter, either personally or by proxy. Corey writes in order to persuade me that the service-user, though unenlightened, is not at fault in any way because they are simply “ignorant” or “unaware” and should not be made to feel uncomfortable. Corey does not reflect on her actions as being inappropriate or empowering of the service-user in the interaction. Rather, she frames her interaction as a de-escalation, perhaps from discord, by softening the English spoken output. This could be interpreted as a technique for re-finding of equilibrium within the interaction exercised through neutralising of the trigger. Neutralising triggers is something that DiAngelo (2011) discusses as a response often found when white fragility, or in this case hearing fragility, is experienced. From a Freirean perspective, this can be interpreted as a ‘defence mechanism’ where the SLI projects onto the assessor, who is trying to change the worldview of the HoH service-user, her “own usual practices: *steering, conquering, and invading*” (Freire 1970, p.138). In this case, ‘steering’ the assessor to back off, which in turn would cause less upset and discomfort to the other hearing client but also to herself. This could have been an awareness-raising moment for the hard-of-hearing service-user, even if it was uncomfortable for her, but Corey redirects it.

Every interpreted action is nuanced and we cannot ignore that there are complex internal motivations within each of the participants: no-one has the full picture. Corey is managing sometimes competing values in this interaction; concern about the time they have, the desire to de-escalate the combative nature of the interaction and faithfulness to the message. She may also be able to remain detached from the dynamic because she is not being pitied directly, whereas the deaf professional is. This could be seen as a strength that allows her to manage the power dynamic and keep the aim of the appointment on track, however, there is a consequence to this which has the potential to leave the deaf

signing professional disempowered. The agency that Corey uses to change the power dynamic in this event needs critical self-reflection. Whilst balancing the different demands of the communication, Corey also needs to recognise the potential for her own discomfort to impact on a moment of consciousness-raising that the assessor is attempting.

Examples of hearing fragility occurred in other reflections as well. Darcy tells the story of a parent-teacher evening at a school with a teenage girl and two deaf parents in attendance. I have analysed this reflection before and re-analyse it here for evidence of hearing fragility.

[The] Deaf father clearly had set ideas and wanted to get them across to any teacher, no matter if they were offensive or not. Teachers have power of information behind them, but also there to serve the parents. [The] Daughter clearly wanted to keep relations smooth between both parties (ie Dad don't embarrass me!). It felt like the father wanted to dominate the situation and take all power (possibly unconsciously).

I felt the need to modify some of his language to make his assertions more sensitive to the feelings of the other person (i.e. 'I don't think this subject will be interesting'). Cultural mediation maybe? Sensitivity to the situation? But I was aware I was taking some control over that. I know him well and I know the family. I held in mind the aims of the situation as getting info for his daughter to make a decision, but knowing that he needs a continuing relationship with the teachers, as does the daughter. However, he has a right to embarrass his daughter?! Unconscious or conscious?

I did try to keep some of his bravado. His wife could have modified, but, although she is a very competent person, she did not have much power, as a step-mum in the situation. His daughter did have teenage stropyness with him in between teachers! (Darcy, Entry 1)

Darcy is unclear and hesitant to give a rationale for modifying the interpretation of the father's communication. Darcy wants the other people, presumably referring to the teachers, not to feel offended by this man's comments. This "cultural mediation" that Darcy mentions (a term which is rife with ambiguity and often used by SLIs to cover a

diverse range of interventions) could have been that the directness of the communication that the father was expressing did not fit hearing cultural norms (Mindess, 2006). As a consequence, Darcy interprets into English with these cultural differences in mind and “softens” the directness. However, even Darcy questions whether this is why she did this. Sensitivity to the others involved and to the situation are other rationales offered. This suggests that Darcy is aware that expressing the directness of the father will have an impact, presumably a negative one, that she wants to avoid. Is this because of her own discomfort with his opinions? Is this about a difficult balance of managing the rapport between all the parties involved? Or, using the lens of hearing fragility, does this reflection expose an oppressive reaction to a person whose message is offensive or conflicting with her own? Once again, this could be a technique used to neutralise the trigger of the father’s combative stance, and to re-establish equilibrium (DiAngelo, 2011). In the final part of Darcy’s reflection, when asked to reflect on her retrospective view of the event, she writes:

I probably would do something similar again. Everyone there seemed to think they had power, so it felt a heavy burden to manage that, and I was very conscious of my decisions. If I had not known the participants so well, and the background info, then I probably wouldn’t have taken as much control in cultural mediation as I did. (Darcy, Entry 1)

Aware of the strength of control that she has taken, Darcy’s rationalisation emphasises her understanding that she has used her agency in this event in an unusual way, by which I mean that it stands out for her. However, the reflection does not manage to go deeper than this. Darcy alludes to having background information that affects her decisions but does not make this available to me. Perhaps there are mitigating circumstances that allow her to justify her decisions, I cannot know. It is clear though that she is conscious of the decisions she has taken, but struggles to be more critical of them, perhaps due to a lack of language with which to critique them.

6.3.4 Oppressor Traits – Desire for Approval

The desire for approval by the oppressed group is one of the traits of an oppressor (Baker-Shenk 1991). Needing approval, gratitude or recognition that your role is significant and necessary appeals to your own self-regard. The following excerpt is from a reflection by Jamie about an audiology appointment with a hearing audiologist, a

hearing support worker and a deaf client. Jamie meets the client and the support worker in the waiting room but is unable to engage the client in conversation before the appointment begins, which is an unusual situation for her. The deaf signing client barely acknowledges Jamie's presence. She writes, "This person nodded but did not make eye contact with me" (Entry 5). She goes on to write:

Reflecting on the event, I feel that I was constantly on the back foot throughout, and I now realise that this began with what I perceived as the client's rudeness on my arrival. I realise that I need to feel 'liked' in order to establish a relationship. To be greeted with indifference and then completely ignored was not only unsettling, it deprived me of the opportunity to gain the prep that I needed and to feel better equipped to manage the event. I could have handled this differently - I could have attempted to override the being frozen out and tried to make conversation with this client and the support worker. This would at least have established the fact that the deaf client wasn't 'rejecting' me, but that it was a behavioural issue. It would also have allowed me to understand the relationship between the deaf client and the support worker, and the extent of the support worker's communication skills. Writing this up now I am still annoyed at the way in which the event unfolded with myself, with the deaf client, the support worker and the clinician. This is one event where I definitely didn't feel in control and it brings home what an uncomfortable feeling that is for me. (Jamie, Entry 5)

In Jamie's analysis there is a level of self-reflexivity that recognises the desire to be liked by clients and how this impacts on consequent interactions, which ultimately aid or obstruct the interpreted interaction that follows. Though Jamie deems the job as "successful" because "I was able to establish communication between all parties" (Entry 5), it is clear that this desire for approval had a negative impact because she was less prepared for the job and revelations about the client's needs became apparent throughout the appointment. Jamie also mentioned that she did not feel "in control" and this is also uncomfortable. This could be an instance of hearing fragility because of the need for control in a situation; however, this needs to be balanced with the need to feel empowered to do your job well, which, in these circumstances, was disrupted. Recognising that a dialogue with a client prior to an interpreted interaction is a valuable thing not only for the SLI but also for the client may assist in making this attempt at connection with the client beforehand feel more equitable. Jamie could have been asking for information

solely to feel more in control but it is more likely that she wanted to clarify details that would enable the job to go more smoothly and give an opportunity to the client to ask any questions they had. Dialogue requires two committed members at the very least and when one member of the dialogue is not committed then the discussion will not be profitable to either party.

A desire for partnership with clients is something SLIs manifest in their reflections. I will now turn my attention to the partnering traits that SLIs manifested in the following sections.

6.3.5 Partnering Traits – Showing Solidarity with Deaf People

Partnering traits, as mentioned in the introduction, can include showing solidarity with deaf people, a desire to transform unjust systems, promoting independence and equality, promoting a horizontal relationship with deaf clients and transparency and accountability. I analysed each of the reflections for evidence of these types of attitudes and begin here with a focus on showing solidarity with deaf people.

During the debrief interview Francis discussed with me the client base that she typically works with and in particular the deaf clients that she regularly works with. She describes them in some detail in this lengthy excerpt. Through this discussion Francis shows a desire to be in solidarity with the deaf clients she works with.

Francis: And also, people interestingly here in this particular community, it's not a particularly empowered and politically active community of deaf people. There are some deaf people who I think are more assertive about, you know assertive when they come into contact with services, most of the people that I work with are not those people. So even their own, even some of their understanding of their own identity actually, isn't that strong because often they're isolated. And they operate in quite an isolated way. So, they don't even have their own deaf structures to shore them up and support them and to share knowledge and all the rest of it. They are some of the most disenfranchised people I've ever met, actually.

Heather: So, do you think of yourself as an ally then at all? Or how do you....?

Francis: Hmmm.... hard to know in a word? Is it an ally?

Heather: ...from what I'm reading [in your reflections] you definitely don't think of yourself as a conduit. Which is a very old model obviously, so I wondered how you envisaged the role that you have when you're interpreting.

Francis: I mean I think, another word, I'm not concerned about the word ally, I'm good with it and it's positive, and stuff like that. I also have an 'enabling' function. So, gosh, it's complicated now.

Heather: It is, isn't it?

Francis: So, one of the things I'm conscious of when I meet these [deaf] people who are disenfranchised, and that sort of sums up the fact that they have less world knowledge than the average person, they certainly have less knowledge and experience of the systems in which I meet them and I have much more because I work with many people in those systems and they move alone by themselves through them. So, I recognise what I know that they don't know. And I think I spend time making choices about what is a priority, what is a priority from moment to moment, and a priority for the patient, to navigate and negotiate these things, and how they can have the conversations they want with people. Or even, suggest the conversations that they might want to have with people. So that's kind of enabling and it is as an ally to them. I don't know, it's a very, it's a tricky one to get hold of. (Francis, debrief, 08:49)

Francis has carefully considered the deaf people that she works with and their status as oppressed people. This excerpt reveals a reflective and critical approach to the work of interpreting. The fact that Francis uses the word 'disenfranchised' shows an understanding that these people are not powerful members of society but disempowered, isolated and lacking general knowledge. This reflection impacts on Francis' way of working with them because she considers what they are trying to achieve in different settings and she gives significant consideration to their goals. Francis also tells me that she has conversations to make her clients aware that they can ask for further information. As someone who is empowered and has at least an adequate fund-of-information and knowledge of systems, Francis describes taking opportunities to impart that knowledge to her disenfranchised clients.

Interestingly, Francis says she is comfortable with the label ‘ally’ and then later ‘enabler’ but concludes with the phrase, “I don’t know, it’s a very, it’s a tricky one to get hold of.” As though, in fact, neither of these labels works well for her. Despite the clear perspective which she sets out in this description of her work with disempowered clients, there is still some hesitation about what that aspect of the job is called. ‘Ally’ as a description contains an element of partiality which some interpreters find uncomfortable perhaps because it suggests that they are non-neutral or biased. It is not clear that this is the case for Francis, but something about the term is causing this hedging. Later in our discussion I introduced the term ‘partner’ and explained it in terms of working with clients (deaf and hearing) to be transparent in what you are doing as the interpreter, to ensure the best outcome you can. Francis finds this term useful and responds:

Partnering is a good word. I like, now, to think what that means. And it fits well for me, because, you’re right, in these triads there are 3 pairs aren’t there? So, there’s me and let’s say a doctor, we’ll call them the professional, me and a professional, me and a deaf person, and then the deaf person and a professional. I’m quite happy to have active roles, well I can only really have... well so, I have an active role with the deaf person, or I can have an active dialogue and whatever, and I can do the same with the professional and I’m really happy about that. And then the reason I’m there is because I’m an interpreter and I have a very active role when I’m interpreting between those two people. But everything I do, about when I work directly [meaning talking directly to one or other client] in a partnered way, is to do something to enhance their direct relationship. Of which, in which I am the interpreter. Yes, so I quite like the idea of partnering, I partner with each of them, for them to partner with themselves. (Francis, debrief, 15:51)

This description of how partnering plays out for Francis offers a new insight perhaps and a new term, which allows for the work that Francis is already doing, by which I mean talking with hearing professionals and deaf service-users separately before, during and after the work of interpreting between them. Francis describes this as having an ‘active role’ or an ‘active dialogue’ which is intriguing, because by emphasizing the ‘active’ there seems to be an underlying message about the possibility of a ‘passive role’. These ideas reflect Shaffer’s (2013) discussions of the ‘active role’ of the interpreter as an evolution from the conduit role, (see section 3.4.1). Francis then goes on to talk about the interpreting aspect of the job which she calls a “*very active role*”. During our

interview, I was witnessing Francis thinking this new concept through out loud. The different aspects of the work of interpreting, which include direct dialogues with clients and interpreting between clients, are separated out into distinct elements. This relates back to section 5.3 on ‘techniques of power’ in which SLIs are sometimes co-interlocutors and empowerers.

Another example of showing solidarity with deaf people can be found in a reflection by Morgan involving the domestic abuse of a deaf woman from abroad. Morgan is working with a foreign deaf client who appears, from Morgan’s description, not to be fluent in any language and therefore Morgan insists on booking a Deaf Interpreter (DI). DIs often specialise in work with people whose signed language is not fluent. Morgan writes, “Working with a DI was invaluable to me to achieve deaf/hearing balance in the room and enable me to not be a lone voice in working with other professionals” (Entry 4). It is almost as though bringing in a DI to work with a ‘voiceless’ subaltern, deaf woman adds a legitimate deaf ‘voice’ to the interaction. The DI is also, presumably, able to communicate with the deaf woman and this act draws attention to the plight of this deaf woman and shows, to the hearing professionals who control the services she will be entitled to, that there is potential for her to have a ‘voice’. This displays a solidarity with the deaf client.

6.3.6 Partnering Traits – Desire to Transform the Unjust Systems

I now focus on the desire to transform unjust systems. There is some overlap with section 6.2.3 above in which I discuss the rationale given by SLIs of appealing to justice. In the first example, Corey relates a story about an interview in an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) assessment office with a deaf service-user and an ESA assessor. The interview does not go smoothly and ends abruptly when the assessor terminates it. I have edited the story where it does not relate to the relationship between the assessor and the service-user:

...the interviewer then asked the client if she could lip read. Her retort was very fiery and I was aware that her nervousness quickly turned to anger as she took this question to be related to her ESA claim and ability to work as opposed to it being a hearing person with no Deaf awareness. They then asked if she could use pen/paper to understand written messages. There was a verbal assault on the interviewer for asking this and saying “Why do they think the interpreter is here!!!”

[...]

I feel it was brought to an abrupt close as the interviewer felt ganged up on and couldn't deal with it. The Deaf person is a fast, expressive signer and it could have been seen as aggressive.

I happen to know one of the nurses that works in the PIP office and have passed on information about Deaf Awareness training for the staff to try and resolve some of these issues. (Corey, Entry 1)

Corey identifies the ESA assessor's lack of awareness about sign language and deaf people and believes this to be the source of the miscommunication that occurs between the deaf signer and the assessor. She does not describe taking any action in the meeting, other than clarifying some terminology with the assessor (something we learn from in another excerpt from this reflection). Retrospectively she contacts a nurse in the ESA office to recommend deaf awareness training for the staff. This reveals a desire to have an impact on an unjust order and change the audist perspective of the assessor. Interestingly, Corey could have blamed the service user in this scenario for jumping to conclusions or being easily angered. However, she does not do that but appears to accept that this type of discrimination, which deaf people can face on a daily basis, can cause a justifiable reaction. Neither does Corey admit to 'softening' the impact of this client's communication, which we have seen as a tactic for managing this type of tense situation in other scenarios. This would appear to be an action taken with the aim of transforming an unjust order.

In another reflection, Bailey recounts the events that occurred once an interpreting interaction had finished. She was booked to interpret for a local council meeting between council staff and people with sensory impairments to discuss whether this type of forum is a useful way of communicating. The meeting was disorganised and frustrating for the deaf attendees. Bailey writes in her reflection about her own feelings:

I felt quite angry, well, slightly riled at the way the council thinks it is doing the right thing – but is actually not meeting the needs of its very clients. So, I was very much aligned with the DP [Deaf people], though the counsellors were clearly trying to do the right thing.

I feel that there should have been a Deaf facilitator – why were the council running the meeting? The DP should have been running the meeting and the council should have been listening to them, right?

I felt so impassioned I actually stayed behind to talk to one DP [deaf person]. I suggested they ask for time prior to the meeting to meet – just the DP, with a chosen Deaf facilitator, to explain the agenda to them and to maybe practice raising some of the points they felt were most important. My rationale being that they aren't unified in their views and could actually make change happen if they focused on the main points for that meeting. They don't currently do this because they literally don't know that they need to do this or how to do this.

This was a stressful but inspiring meeting. I really saw for myself – and reminded myself – about the barriers DP face in even attending meetings that are supposed to be designed for them. I will definitely talk about this at my peer group, just to remind my friends not to forget about these barriers!!! (Bailey, Entry 5)

Bailey witnesses first-hand the unjustness of the council systems and perceives that they are inaccessible to the deaf attendees. As a result, she stays behind after the event is finished to discuss the problems that arose in the meeting and offers advice about how they might navigate this better in a future meeting. It is possible to see this as controlling, or oppressive and of course we do not know from this account how this guidance or advice was offered. However, if we take Bailey's account at face value the motivating factor is anger at the council's oppressive way of conducting the meeting, ignorant of the context from which the deaf attendees are coming from. Once again, we see audist assumptions governing the actions of the hearing participants and this is what Bailey reacts against. She shows a clear alignment with the deaf attendees and offers a possible solution that could make an impact on council practices in the future. By offering advice outside of the assignment, essentially in her own time, she appears to be allying with the deaf signers rather than attempting to rescue them or patronise them.

The following excerpt from Morgan returns to the complex case that involved a deaf woman from a foreign country described by Morgan as having “no language (sign or written [foreign language] or British/English)” (Morgan, Entry 4). Morgan has worked with her before and involved a deaf interpreter at a previous stage, therefore we can assume that it is possible to communicate with the deaf woman using some signs or

gesturing. This woman was in difficulty and ends up at a police station having slept rough the night before. At different points Morgan works with police officers, a social worker and a housing officer. She also spends time post-appointment contacting social services to enquire further about this client and to ensure that the relevant professional responsible for the case is aware of the complex cultural and language issues. As she reflects on the work she has done she writes:

I am finding it hard to be quietly reflective without feelings of anger, sadness and [a] sense of absolute powerlessness to make something happen. Talking to an endless succession of professionals who seem to not pass on good practice around communication issues. When I emailed the newly allocated social worker – they replied to say my view was useful as they had thought the communication issues were around them working with learning disabilities and Makaton and therefore not understanding how to communicate with [the deaf woman]. I have done a further email to suggest they need to book interpreters as this is what this client needs...they also said they are contacting the local [foreign country the deaf woman came from] community – again I replied to say great for [foreign country] culture but [the deaf woman] is DEAF (I didn't use capitals but oh boy, do I feel like shouting!!!!)

So, I am doing my best as a professional interpreter and in my Interpreter Manager role within an agency to advocate for communication needs, but it is really annoying. I also know that the Deaf advocate has been contacted so there may be some light in sight. I am trying not to be critical about other services as I know all public services are stretched, but 'a stitch in time saves nine' and a little bit of joined up thinking would really help.

I feel that my interpreting practice is not in question – that I have been ethical in my decision-making and that is empowering, but being 'ignored' until making contact with social services felt very distemping [sic] i.e. we'll give you voice while in the room but once you leave...

Plus my overarching concern all the way through has been for the client, [the deaf woman], *to ensure she has a voice and starts to gain positive empowerment for herself* - I also fear that the more she learns the more insight she may gain to her

situation and am keen that services in the area take onboard the ‘deaf stuff’ and get her a good deaf key worker. (Morgan, Entry 5, *italics mine*)

This lengthy reflection gives an insight into the complex issues surrounding this vulnerable deaf adult. It also reveals partnering traits in Morgan’s approach to her work. She explores ways to make the other professionals involved in this case more aware of the language difficulties which are clearly being misunderstood or ‘reinterpreted’. Partnering here, involves working with hearing clients to ensure that they understand the situation fully. By engaging with them she is attempting to impart the knowledge that she believes they need to do the best job they can for this client, with regard to language support. By educating other potential oppressors, those who have audist dispositions in their own habituses, Morgan is trying to have a positive impact on the outcomes that this deaf client will receive. Following Inghilleri (2005) (see section 3.3.3), we see a clear example of the SLI taking responsibility to ensure that inter-cultural information is imparted so that the disempowered participant is perceived differently to how the police and social workers initially position her. In this situation perhaps this woman’s identity as a homeless, ‘helpless’ person and belonging to another culture (though not a deaf culture) is prioritised over her need for accessible language brokering strategies (which may appear time-consuming and problematic for these public service employees).

Morgan has a desire to transform the unjust order that surrounds this deaf woman, and she uses inter-cultural education to try to do that. Though we are not party to how she communicates with these professionals, she describes reminding them that they need to book interpreters and recommending that they involve a deaf advocate, instead of allowing them to label this woman as incapable of understanding. This is a humanising approach which displays trust in the capacity of this marginalised woman to be involved in her own decision-making and independence. This is emphasised when Morgan states that she wants “to ensure [the deaf woman] has a voice and starts to gain positive empowerment for herself”. This resonates with the following section on the promotion of independence and equality. Morgan’s actions here could be interpreted as paternalistic because she is doing this work without, as far as we know, being transparent about it with the deaf woman. However, it appears that she is intervening with systems that are ignorant of the needs of this woman and trying to educate them so that they can empower their client. Morgan states that her priority is the empowerment of this deaf woman and does not position herself as a ‘rescuer’ but as a professional taking responsibility for explaining communication requirements.

6.3.7 Partnering Traits – Promoting Independence and Equality

In the following story Morgan describes a health appointment at which there is a deaf adult patient who has other characteristics that require specialised communication strategies, the patient's mother and two specialist nurses. Morgan explains prior to this excerpt that the interpreters (two of them) feel they have to take responsibility for ensuring that the deaf patient understands and is engaged in the appointment because often the communication is directed towards the mother. (I have redacted information that could lead to the loss of anonymity in this excerpt).

My choices are to ask [the] client if he is clear about the discussion and I chose to stop them talking to make sure they explained the medical sides to him clearly, asking them to look at him and check his understanding. I believe the outcome is that the client leaves knowing how important it is not to drink too much, to continue to take their meds, that their health is improving and that they need to continue with treatment, that they are safe and aware of how serious this all is....
[redacted information]

Critical reflection:

We have taken a team approach to this client and have shared how we sign things, what works well and so on and the [specialist area] nurse is really understanding that this client needs specialist support. She describes us as [a] 'dog without a bone', but totally gets why we ask her to call up visual information, draw pictures and get her to repeat information.

.... [redacted material]

My job as an interpreter is to make sure the medical team SEE this individual and meet their needs and not for them to make assumptions. I questioned the [specialist area] nurse's description of us - and she said to me later that it's a good thing, that we let her know how best to work with him. This feels positive, however I was really struck that I had to enforce the rules of communication again once another professional was in the room and know next time that he will have to face another consultant – so am also left with the knowledge that these rules will probably have to be enforced again. (Morgan, Entry 1)

In this setting where the medical professionals appear to focus their attention on the mother when she is present in the room, Morgan is clear that the patient also needs to understand and when the information is not given clearly, she and her colleague will ask for further explanation and potentially for visual aids. This has led the specialist nurse to refer to them as persistent. This intervention on behalf of the patient has the ultimate purpose of demanding equal access to information, and the promotion of independence. Whilst perhaps the nurses think the mother can explain to her son what is happening, Morgan wants to ensure that he understands, during the appointment, what he needs to do in order to stay healthy. Morgan goes so far as to ask the nurses to look at the patient and check whether he is understanding or not. This very directive approach is of interest as it is a strong intervention in the interpreted interaction in that it makes Morgan a highly visible interpreter who is using her agency to exercise solidarity (Angelelli, 2004) by giving the deaf patient full access to his medical appointment. By working with the hearing nurses, Morgan partners with the deaf client.

Examples given in 5.3.2 *Empowerment*, support this argument about promoting independence and autonomy. Alex's attempts to empower a client with a learning disability by offering the deaf client an opportunity to answer questions directly that the hearing professionals are discussing amongst themselves. Similarly, Francis checks with a nineteen-year-old deaf man about whether he wants the person accompanying him to go into a doctor's appointment with them. She appears to do this to ensure that the deaf man makes a deliberate choice before the appointment begins and encourages a frank discussion about what the man desires. In a separate reflection Francis also ensures that a deaf patient with a mental health concern knows their rights regarding choice of interpreter and expectations regarding confidentiality. We do not know the consequences of these actions on the deaf signers and therefore cannot judge whether they were successful in empowering them, nevertheless, in each of these three examples there is evidence of the intention to promote independence and equality.

6.3.8 Partnering Traits – Horizontal Relationships, Transparency and Accountability

Horizontal relationships, in opposition to vertical relationships, are Freire's metaphor for emphasising the need to treat marginalised groups as equals who are included in open dialogue. Jamie writes a reflection about a physiotherapist appointment with a deaf patient. At the start of the appointment Jamie describes what happens as they negotiate the seating arrangement:

The appointment had a slightly interesting start in that the Deaf [service-user] moved the spare chair, from next to them, to next to the physiotherapist. I have been practicing a ‘do you mind if I move this chair to beside you/re-arrange your furniture?’ sort of approach, rather than just moving the chair (as a result of the lecture at ASLI conference a few years back...Mark Schofield and Rachel Mapson??). It seems to work well as a bit of an icebreaker, and I usually add about the Deaf person needing to ‘look at both of us’ if needs be. The Deaf person making the first move with the chair was a new one, but it seemed to work well as it felt like they were in charge, putting the participants where they needed to be. The physio didn’t appear put out by this move, even though I suspect she had not worked with a signed language interpreter before. (Jamie, Entry 2)

Jamie welcomes the initiative taken by the deaf patient in this scenario. Normally she would manage this aspect of the work herself. What becomes apparent in this reflection is that this gives the deaf patient some power because Jamie tells us “it felt like they were in charge”. This appears to be a manifestation of the desire for a horizontal relationship with the deaf client.

In this account Francis tells us about a regular interpreting job that she has with a deaf patient and a doctor. She has been doing this job for years and knows both clients well. Francis describes the power dynamics as “in balance in so much as they ever could be.” This example shows transparency between all clients:

I feel as satisfied now as I was then. For me, it’s an example of an appointment and interaction that “works”. It has taken years to get to this point although the attitudes from all parties has always been a positive and respectful one. The Doctor has been very good from the start. The patient has learned a great deal from him and over time, fewer misunderstandings occur and there is a greater fund of knowledge for him to draw upon. The patient has a number of existing, chronic conditions; all of them complicated and difficult to manage by themselves, put together they form a large part of his life and life-style. I don’t think the situation could have been improved, I wouldn’t do anything differently in the future.

Something that I do in those appointments is have some direct dialogue with both the doctor and the patient and I inform each other what has just been said. It “oils the wheels.” and I believe I am right in doing it with best intentions. (Francis, Entry 1)

Francis acts as a co-interlocutor in this situation to “dialogue” with both parties, offering transparency by ensuring each party is aware of what is being discussed. Though we do not know the details of these interactions, this action is presented as being integral to the communication going smoothly.

Returning to Jamie’s appointment with a deaf patient and hearing physiotherapist, Jamie reflects on the need for transparency.

The only other issue that really stuck with me from this assignment was just how much rests on the interpreter’s accurate translation of the questions and answers. There were a lot of questions designed to detect signs of cancer and on a number of occasions *I stated that I was checking with the SU [service-user] to make sure he had understood the question and that I had relayed an accurate response*. This felt very important, as he was explaining about blood in his stools and there were questions about the colour of the blood etc. It was interesting how my awareness of what this could mean, together with the physio’s excellent homing in on details, *resulted in a very careful checking and re-checking of what was being said*. I felt very much like a ‘gate-keeper’, in that the physio didn’t have direct access to the information the SU was providing and it was my responsibility to ‘get it right’. I felt the power was in my hands in this appointment, and that felt quite a heavy, and some extent, unwanted burden. (Jamie, Entry 2, *italics mine*)

Jamie’s sense of responsibility to be accurate in this appointment triggers a need to check with the deaf patient and this in turn requires her to be transparent about the process with the physiotherapist. Her own feeling of being a ‘gatekeeper’ seems to be very uncomfortable and burdensome. In response to this she maintains accountability with both clients by checking, rechecking and explaining the process. By ‘demystifying’ the process (Turner, 2007) and redistributing the accountability for the coproduction of meaning (Turner and Dickinson, 2009), Jamie is purposefully transparent with both clients (see section 3.4.1 for further information).

Taylor gives an example of partnering through a horizontal relationship and transparency in her debrief interview. We focussed on one of her reflections about a deaf professional. I have chosen to keep confidential the profession of this individual to maintain anonymity. Taylor had never met this person before. They work in a large institution and alongside other hearing people who are colleagues and service-users. In the interests of brevity and to maintain anonymity I have edited this excerpt.

Taylor: [14:00] But you know the responsibility was quite big and, in the end, we had to agree a number of strategies particularly when they talked about procedures and [terminology] because you can't possibly know how to spell all [this terminology] for example. You know, they all sound like a Greek island to me. So, I had to say to her look, 'it's not appropriate to say excuse me how do you spell that?' [laughs] so there are strategies that we kind of had to put in place around... when they were just, the stream of stuff made no sense to me, but supposedly it made sense to all the people in the room.... [redacted material]

Heather: [15.21] Did you, you know, when you were negotiating those strategies, and I assume there wasn't a lot of time for doing that, was it on the hoof, or were there times when you talked about what would work?

Taylor: Some of it was very much in the moment, so when we were walking or invariably getting lost from place to place in the [building] and I'd just say to her 'that was tricky and I don't know, obviously it's significant, but how significant is that?'... [redacted material]

[17:08] We did sit down once and we had about an hour where we talked about all this stuff and I asked her 'what are other [interpreters] doing?' Because I was keen to have similar tactics to other interpreters. (Taylor, debrief, 14:00)

This discussion reveals a desire to work with the deaf signing professional to ensure that the strategies that Taylor is using are successful. She is open about what was difficult and asks critical questions about whether the consequences would be significant. This dialogue with the deaf professional offers the opportunity for accountability, recognition of potential weaknesses in the interpreting and a desire to learn from the professional. In another example from Taylor's reflections, she describes working for a different

organisation with deaf professionals involved. Once again, to preserve anonymity I am not disclosing the name or nature of the organisation. The organisation offers preparation to the interpreters it books which includes acronym sheets and terminology which is complex. Taylor relates the following:

I usually feel empowered to work with this particular organization in many contexts that I wouldn't normally aspire to work in because I know I can get support and get looked after to do my job. Power dynamics feel equitable because of the above. (Taylor, Entry 2)

She followed up in our debrief interview with more information about how this organisation empowers its interpreter,

Taylor: [03:32] The philosophy of the organisation is such that they want to empower and deliver a service that suits [their client-base] ... [redacted material] they've had [interpreters] together regularly to talk about terminology and language but also what the person that we're working with, the professional, what they're actually doing. Because when I first started I didn't, I wasn't quite sure what their job really was. So, it's been, it's a very good, working practice example [...]

Taylor: [05:35] It's a very healthy organisation in terms of you know, how the staff are looked after and the interpreters, so you know we feel like, well I feel like, I mean it's the best working practice I've experienced as an interpreter. [...]

Taylor: [06:34] The director is particularly keen to support, she doesn't offer things regularly, but I know when I've had issues with the job she's said, 'would you like some time?' Or I've asked her (it's worked both ways) she's offered it and I've said, 'do you know that particular thing I've found really hard, could we talk about it?' and she's said 'let's go after the job and we'll...' but they're all very accessible in that way... (Taylor, debrief)

The transparency and horizontal relationship goes both ways in this example. The organisation itself is offering the opportunity to interpreters to be trained to do their job well, because they understand that everyone needs to be empowered to do a good job.

Taylor also takes up opportunities to discuss challenges in the work, encouraging dialogue and mutual learning.

This section has showcased stories in which the SLIs have told me about their intentions to partner with deaf signers in order to facilitate more liberating experiences for these clients.

6.4 Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter I examined how SLIs rationalise the techniques of power that they use. They describe a commitment to the values of challenging marginalization, promoting autonomy and appealing to justice, all of which reject the impartiality and neutrality of traditional codes of ethics of interpreters.

In the second part of this chapter I presented evidence of Freirean oppressor traits; possessive consciousness, pejorative and paternalistic attitudes, hearing fragility and desire for approval. These show vestigial audist tendencies in hearing SLIs. It is important not to vilify SLIs as audist but to remember that these are ingrained in the habitus at a very early stage. Audist dispositions are deep-seated in members of a society in which deaf BSL users are not valued and celebrated equally. Only exposure to oppressor traits and regular and diligent self-reflection are the way to change them. As Freire repeatedly writes, “[t]hose who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly” (1970, p.42). Many SLIs have begun this process of self-reflection by virtue of their relationships with deaf people and perhaps through their training courses, however, the process is not discrete and constant attention needs to be paid to these foundational behaviours which unconsciously arise from the habitus. By highlighting here how these traits embed themselves within stories about professional interactions we become aware of how deep-seated they are. Roots of established trees cannot be seen from the surface; they are not easily pulled up for inspection and pruning them is a painful and destabilising act.

Resisting audist values, however, is also evidenced in the reflections through the incorporation of partnering traits. These included showing solidarity with the oppressed group, a desire to transform unjust systems, promoting independence, equality, horizontal relationships, transparency and accountability. Despite being immersed in an audist society SLIs displayed a desire to partner with the oppressed minority at times and to intervene in ways that promoted liberation from oppression. In the final chapter that follows I will discuss in detail the significance of these behaviours and the implications of this research.

My objective has been to describe perceptions of power that SLIs hold so that we have a richer, more nuanced understanding of the ambiguities and complexities in these perceptions. SLIs hold several positions at the same time; they rationalise being non-neutral co-interlocutors for social justice reasons but can simultaneously feel conflicted about those rationalisations. To differing degrees across individual sets of reflections the participants in my study manifest oppressor traits and partnering traits at different times.

Chapter 7: *Emancipatory Interpreting* and the Problem of Professional Discourse

7.1 Introduction

In this, the final chapter of this thesis, I will present a brief summary of the preceding chapters to show the path that I have taken to arrive here. I will then discuss the findings of my research and draw conclusions. In **chapter one** after introducing the context and background to my research I presented my overarching research question, followed by the sub-questions:

How do SLIs conceptualise power dynamics within their professional practice?

- *What language do SLIs use when they are narrating stories about power dynamics?*
- *What actions and techniques do SLIs describe when they attempt to make an impact on power dynamics?*
- *What rationales do SLIs offer for their actions and techniques?*
- *What traits are revealed through the stories SLIs tell about power dynamics in their practice?*

In **chapter two** I focussed on the theoretical frameworks for exploring power dynamics and I contextualised concepts of power and privilege within the field of Deaf studies and situated deaf signers in the UK as an oppressed minority who regularly experience audist discrimination. I concluded by focussing on Freire's approach to emancipatory work between oppressors and oppressed people. In **chapter three** I turned my attention to interpreting studies and the literature surrounding the role and responsibilities of the interpreter, and debates about their neutrality, visibility and agency. This led to specific debates about power in the research in the interpreting studies field and finally to signed language interpreting research on the ally model which connected with Freire's emancipatory framework. In **chapter four** I focussed on the qualitative methodology I chose for researching the questions I had defined and positioned myself as transparently as I was able. I then went on to describe the methods I selected for collecting the data with the participants and for analysing it. In **chapters five and six**, I presented in detail

the analysis of the data I collected and included excerpts of the reflections by SLIs who participated in my research. I structured the analysis by taking each of the sub-questions in turn and responding to these questions with the stories that the SLIs created and my interpretation of those stories.

In this chapter my aim is to discuss the implications of my analysis and propose an alternative framework for thinking about interpreting practice. What this research reveals, and what I will discuss in detail, is firstly that SLIs are aware of their agency in assignments where power dynamics are notable, and they make decisions to act as a result (7.2). Secondly, the discourse that SLIs use to discuss their work could be perceived as problematic, inconsistent and often inadequate for critical understandings of power dynamics (7.3). Thirdly, I will propose a framework for thinking about interpreting which prioritises the value of social justice when working with a marginalised and disempowered deaf signer; I have called this *emancipatory interpreting* (7.4). I will follow on from this with a discussion of the problematic intersection of *emancipatory interpreting* and an inadequate professional discourse (7.5). In the second half of this chapter I will focus on the contributions this research has made to theory (7.6.1), methodology (7.6.2) and professional practice (7.6.3), and then cover the limitations of my research (7.7). I will finish with some recommendations for further research and interpreter training (7.8).

7.2 Agency

It is clear from my research that the SLI participants in this study perceive themselves as agents who make conscious interventions to impact on power dynamics. Every interpreter who participated was clear in describing their deliberate attempts to use their own agency to change aspects of an interaction and manage the power dynamics. In many of the reflections SLIs described allying with the deaf signer and engaging in different ways with deaf and hearing clients to improve the situation for the deaf signer. This allying reflects the concepts that are outlined in section 3.7 on the ally interpreter; a model of interpreting that has been in the professional discourse for some time but is poorly defined. The SLIs describe using various techniques of power to transform the power dynamic in some way (see section 5.3). This involved becoming a co-interlocutor and directly speaking with different members of the interaction to give background information, offer an opinion, encourage participation or explain cultural differences. They also acted as agents of empowerment (see section 5.3.2) by double-checking information, interrupting the interaction, controlling the interaction, repeating

information, enforcing communication rules and unpacking information. Additionally, they took what Mason and Ren (2012) describe as a ‘non-neutral’ stance (see section 5.3.3) by, for example, using turn-taking strategies to ensure one client is able to speak or interrupt despite the other client’s attempts to maintain the floor.

This term ‘non-neutral’ is potentially problematic, as Metzger (1999) established through her study of two SLIs in medical settings (see section 2.2). She describes neutrality as a paradox because SLIs are participants in the exchange and make an impact on it. Though I employed Mason and Ren’s (2012) term ‘non-neutral’ for categorising some of the actions taken by SLIs (see section 5.3.3), it has remained a troubling category for me as a researcher. The term belies the ever-present yet mythical expectation that interpreters can be neutral, a discourse I find myself caught up in. Throughout the thesis I have used this term ‘non-neutral’ to describe actions of interpreters which are aligned in some way with one client rather than another, or perhaps aligned with the SLI’s own concerns. As I discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.2.1), Foucault states, “every human relation is to some degree a power relation. We move in a world of perpetual strategic relations” (Foucault 1988, p.168). Therefore, every action that any individual takes is non-neutral, by this definition, because it has some strategic value even if that is to move the conversation forward. The use of terminology such as ‘non-neutral’ maintains the myth that interpreters should be conduits, a myth that is upheld by practicing interpreters. Evidence for this is found in this thesis. Furthermore, this myth is upheld by interpreting studies scholars (see section 7.3.2 below for further discussion). For future research it raises the question: what terminology is helpful to use when describing the actions of interpreters? Actions might be categorised as strategic but intended for different objectives: to encourage collaboration, to ally with one client specifically, to display passivity and any number of other positions. It could be valuable to reanalyse the data I collected with this objective, however for the purposes of answering my stated research questions this was not something I was able to achieve in this thesis.

Despite this terminological challenge, which warrants further examination, the evidence gathered in the narratives of the SLIs reveals that they are clearly conscious of the actions they describe. My study further supports other research in interpreting studies, which shows that interpreters have an impact on power dynamics. Mason and Ren (2012) evidence this through analysis of interpreted interactions. As the perceptions of the interpreters in their study were not collected we do not know whether their actions were conscious, unconscious, or if conscious, how they understood them. Metzger’s (1999) research revealed that the interpreters were potentially biasing the interaction in favour

of the deaf signer, whether consciously or not, and my study shows that SLIs were consciously acting in favour of the deaf signer. Angelelli's (2004) ethnographic study of hospital interpreting used interviews to discover the perceptions of interpreters regarding their agency and this revealed that interpreters are aware that they intervene in interpreted events and change them. Sometimes their intention is to change the power dynamic, for example giving voice to a marginalized patient (see section 3.3). My research supports Angelelli's findings by producing more evidence that interpreters consciously decide to act in response to power dynamics. Additionally, by focusing only on power dynamics, I have been able to show that they choose to act in response to perceptions of social injustice. The SLIs in my study offered rationalisations for their actions, which appealed to emancipatory values like social justice, promotion of autonomy and empowerment of marginalized clients (see section 6.2). Furthermore, using a Freirean approach to my analysis of the narratives I was able to analyse partnering traits showing solidarity with the deaf signer. These SLIs express feelings towards the situation that the deaf signer might be in: sometimes they express anger or sadness about a situation, they may be impassioned by unequal treatment, sometimes they recognise a lack of deaf awareness or there is a feeling of empathy for a disenfranchised client. There are instances when they show a desire to be transparent about what they are doing in the spirit of being accountable, or advocate for a powerless client by requesting a deaf advocate (as one example). These partnering traits present a form of evidence that SLIs are keenly aware that many deaf signing clients, though by no means all, do not always have the capital or capacity to empower themselves to get what they want or need.

We have seen, therefore, that SLIs are articulators of power in the Foucauldian sense because they exercise their agency. Daily interactions involve a strategic power play according to Foucault which, if applied to an interpreting assignment where an expected dynamic would normally take place (i.e. a doctor's appointment), we can imagine the overlaying of a new dynamic and an altered set of articulations of power (Foucault 1988, see section 2.2.1). This disruption to the expected dynamic links to Inghilleri's (2005) work, which draws on Bourdieu's 'zones of uncertainty' (see section 3.3.3). The interpreter has an opportunity, because of their position and their intercultural knowledge, to act in a way that can change perceptions. They are not solely responsible in the exchange for the power dynamic but they can rupture established patterns of interacting for the benefit of a client, particularly one who is being marginalized. This research shows that SLIs perceive themselves to interact in these ways, deliberately and consciously. Though Inghilleri focuses on the political asylum

process, my research broadens the scope of our understanding of where these behaviours appear. For these SLIs, they seem to be a fairly regular occurrence in routine community interactions. Perhaps the reason for this is that these situations have the potential to be disempowering for deaf signers.

There are also instances when SLIs recognised a failure to act and the impact that this potentially had on the interaction that they were involved in (see section 5.3.4). This non-action has an agentic effect because colluding with oppressive behaviours maintains the *status quo*. I did not observe any of the described interactions by SLIs and am therefore unable to judge specifically how non-actions impacted on power dynamics between all participants, however it is important to state that interpreters need to consider the impact of any non-action as part of evaluating their agency and responsibility.

7.3 Problematic Professional Discourse

I established that language and discourse shape the ways that we think because they are the vehicles for ideology which, as Foucault makes clear, means that discourses have power (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.5.1). The discourse that we use to talk about a concept shapes the way that we understand that concept. As Schaffer so aptly puts it, "[t]he metaphor, rather than simply a means for describing our role, began to shape our role *and* our work" (2013, p.129 *italics in original*) (see section 3.4.1 for more discussion). In this research I focused on aspects of the professional discourse surrounding power; a language of power (5.2) which included a discourse of interpreting models and agency (5.2.1), and the metaphors that SLIs use to discuss concepts of power (5.2.2 to 5.2.5). In both cases these elements were problematic in the ways that they represented agency.

7.3.1 Metaphors

Metaphors for power, unearthed in this research, were not any different from metaphors used in society at large. However, by analysing them in these contexts it was useful to see how they can impact on understandings of power in the interpreting profession. The metaphors included power im/balance, knowledge as power, power as an object or commodity and power as a tool. They each had utility for describing power dynamics in different ways, but they also had drawbacks and in particular tended to obscure the agency of the interpreter.

Im/balance of power conjures the image of a weighing scale with a hearing person on one side and a deaf person on the other, which does not allow for positioning the

interpreter on the weighing scale. This leaves the interpreter invisible rather than visible (Angelelli 2004). And yet SLIs still talk about rebalancing power and redressing power, so it appears that they do envisage themselves as active agents in this balancing act. Perhaps the act of rebalancing, by placing oneself on the balance on one side or another, needs to be highlighted more when talking about power dynamics, in order to be crystal clear about the SLI's agency.

Power as an object or commodity represents power as a finite resource that can be taken away from an individual and redistributed in some way. The difficulty with this image is that it also encourages the sense that when you do not have 'the power' you are rendered powerless, when in fact agents may have the potential to articulate power throughout an interaction. This type of discourse around power could have the potential to dissuade interpreters from considering their agency and powerfulness and, as a consequence encourage them to abdicate their responsibility. It seems important for SLIs to recognise that though they may feel disempowered by circumstances or by other interactants, they may in fact still have options open to them. Conversely, SLIs need to recognise that they have power and sometimes they may not need to articulate it, because others in the situation are capable of managing power dynamics and choose to do that autonomously. The interpreter needs a keen awareness of power dynamics between all participants including themselves, which reveals that they perhaps 'have' power but choose not to articulate it. In either of these cases there is a decision being made by the interpreter agent, to act or not act for the benefit of a client. This metaphor of power as a commodity does not offer an image that captures well the nuances of power dynamics.

Knowledge as power was more useful for considering an aspect of the nature of power, in that it connects up expertise and the linguistic, social and cultural capital that SLIs have with the power they hold, especially when that is compared with a client's potential lack of capital, particularly where it relates to the consequences of being a marginalised minority in an audist society. As we found out from Foucault's linking of power/knowledge (see section 2.2.1), these two elements are intimately connected. Recognition of 'hearing privilege' (as described in section 2.4.2) as a type of knowledge/power is, I would suggest, critical for interpreters to understand from the outset of their careers. Denying that your own knowledge of how the world works or of your ability to strategically navigate situations that others cannot is dangerous for a professional working with a minority group. It is potentially dangerous because it allows the interpreter to pretend that they are 'neutral' and that their presence is only mechanical. An interpreter in this type of denial could potentially collude with the inequitable,

disenfranchising structural discrimination that deaf signers regularly face. Knowledge/power is a Foucauldian concept that seems to offer some scope for describing power dynamics. It also implies that knowledge can be shared with everyone in the situation and if I extrapolate that further, it can prompt an interpreter who judges that one client is less knowledgeable, to consider how they might facilitate knowledge-sharing. Alternatively, if an SLI judges a hearing client to be maintaining audist discourses in their behaviour towards a client, they may be able to disrupt that discourse. If knowledge is power then knowledge-sharing is empowerment.

Metaphors steer the way we think about life (Lakoff and Johnson, 2011) and these feed into professional discourses. The ways in which SLIs talk about their work and analyse their agency need to be fit for purpose. When discourses around their decision-making and action-taking obscure agency and responsibility, then interpreters are less likely to be critical. Therefore, professional interpreter discourse about agency and power needs to shift, to offer more realistic metaphors and descriptions of power dynamics.

7.3.2 Models of Interpreting

One prevailing professional discourse for SLIs, which developed chiefly as a result of professionalisation, maintains that SLIs are neutral, impartial or do not intervene as an agent (see section 3.5). This powerful discourse, which we saw evidenced within the participants' narratives in section 5.2.1, shows how tenacious the grip of the conduit model is on SLIs. Codes of conduct for SLIs have evolved in recent years, however there remains a hangover that continues to haunt SLIs, evidenced by the participants of this study. In my data, the conduit metaphor reared its head repeatedly, even when the SLIs were transparent about their alignment with a deaf signer. The original code of conduct published by the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP) is, as I discussed in section 3.5, a Foucauldian technology of power. That code was originally viewed as a "tool of empowerment for Deaf people" (Tate and Turner 2002, p.54) in response to the previous incarnation of the interpreter as a missionary or well-meaning family member who often spoke on behalf of the deaf signer (Scott-Gibson 1990). It acted as a protection against disempowerment by hearing people, promoting empowerment for deaf signers (Schaffer 2013). In some ways it was effective, even if it was not realistic, because interpreters felt disempowered by the code and consequently absented themselves from any agency and responsibility to act humanely; this is evidenced by some responses to the survey that Tate and Turner (2002) conducted. However, in that same study, many SLIs also felt the need to 'step out of their role' (ibid

2002, p.61). This technology of power gave the impression that deaf signers were being protected from their oppressors but forced SLIs to enact powerful interventions covertly (ibid 2002, p.55). The requirement for confidentiality ensured that SLIs did not discuss openly and transparently the actions that they took with clients or even, it appears, with professional peers. This created an interpreting façade behind which subterfuge and denial were unhappy sisters.

This situation has since evolved but seems to still have an impact on SLIs. Some of the SLIs in this study specifically state that they do not adhere to this model as the one that they practice. These SLIs often write about or discuss the interventions that they make with candour and transparency and yet still struggle with whether these actions are appropriate or whether their professional colleagues would agree with their decisions. The conduit model and the perceived need to be neutral or impartial in the profession has such a strong hold on interpreters that, even though they can rationalise their actions to some degree, they still sense a conflict between the values that guide their practice and the normative values of the profession. This resonates with Dean's (2014) assessment of the conflict between the taught norms of the profession and the potentially ethical solutions that interpreters consider in practice, when she refers to the work of Rest (1984):

If an interpreter, accurately interpreting a situation, decided that taking action outside of message transfer was ethically sound (moral judgement), she may fail to take that action since it deviates from the normative message. Maintaining the norm would conflict with the decision she determined to be ethical in that given context and to follow through would be risky. (Dean 2014, p.70)

Conflict between professional norms and ethical practice appear to be a constant source of discomfort and difficulty, evidenced in my study. Not finding resolution in this area of the practice has the potential to lead to chronic self-doubt and, importantly, dissatisfaction in the job, which can lead to retention difficulties. This is something which Dean and Pollard (2001) are concerned to analyse in relation to Theorell and Karasek's (1996) work on demand-control theory. Theorell and Karasek (1996) make a link between occupational stress and job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the historic requirement for total confidentiality in the interpreting profession has discouraged supervisory relationships and critical reflection with peers about specific cases (Dean and Pollard 2001), which can cause more occupational stress and self-doubt.

As I draw my conclusions about this research and consider the overarching themes, it has become apparent that there is a problem with the scholarly discourse as well. The very fact that scholars name actions taken by interpreters as ‘non-neutral interventions’ (which I have followed in this research), as though interrupting, clarifying or interjecting are somehow extra to their role, is evidence that this discourse is persistent. As an agent in the process we might expect an interpreter to interject from time to time (to ensure a smooth process or clarify meaning) without ethical debate, but the scholarly discourse still regards these actions as extra-ordinary, or occasional. Though the coordinating and visible role of the interpreter has been described by scholars like Wadensjö (1998) and Angelelli (2004) (see section 3.2 and 3.3), their descriptions have not fully permeated the thinking of practicing interpreters regarding their positionality. Turner (2007) has posited the label ‘quantum interpreting’ to offer new ways of perceiving the interpreter’s role and responsibilities as well as those of the clients, and Turner and Best (2017) rename this ‘expository interpreting’ (see section 3.5). As yet neither of these terms seem to have emerged within the professional discourse (attendance at ASLI conferences for two years provides anecdotal evidence of this in the UK). Even Dean and Pollard’s (2011) description of a ‘practice profession’ (see section 3.5), which avoids talking about models or role in order to promote the taking of responsibility for actions and decisions, has not yet changed the discourse enough for SLIs to let go of the old metaphors of the profession entirely. It clearly has the potential to do this, however, and the discourse of a practice profession has been anecdotally evidenced at conferences and in conversation with some SLIs, and some SLIs mentioned it in passing in my scoping study and in debrief interviews. Perhaps models of interpreting since the conduit model, which have been labelled descriptively, (for example the ‘bilingual-bicultural model’ or ‘quantum interpreting’) but have no metaphoric element attached to them, have not offered the power that a metaphor can hold in the mind. Maybe it is time to create a new metaphor for the interpreting profession? One that offers agency, visibility, flexibility and dynamicity.

Gleaning from Bourdieu’s theory of praxis, the concepts of habitus, capital and field have the potential to spark the creation of a new metaphor. Agents compete within a field for resources of capital that can be economic, social or symbolic (see section 2.2.2). If we think about interpreting practice using the metaphor of ‘team sport’ it is possible to incorporate aspects of Bourdieu’s praxis into this concept. Consider the assignment setting as the court or pitch on which the sport is played, and the interpreter and the clients as the players. The arrangements are flexible, the players could all be playing for the

same team, or they could be on different teams. The interpreter might be on the same team as one player or another depending on the booking arrangements or alignment with a particular client. For example, when an interpreter is booked by a deafblind client, hearing clients may not understand how turn taking will work and overlook the needs of the deafblind client, like the example we heard about in a reflection by Corey (Entry 3). The SLI may need to explain to the hearing clients how to work with an interpreter and a deafblind client explicitly at the beginning of the assignment, essentially introducing cultural capital that could assist with a smoother playing of the game. A SLI could see themselves as being on the deafblind person's team because they are aware, from previous experience, that hearing people often forget how to manage communication in these settings. The SLI might, therefore decide to team up with the deafblind client to discuss how to manage these moments when hearing clients forget, particularly as the deafblind client may not be aware of this happening. During the assignment, if these cultural communication rules are ignored or forgotten the SLI can remind interlocutors what is required for smooth communication.

Recognising that some players have less of a 'feel for the game', less understanding of the rules or less capital than others, an interpreter may choose to level the playing field. For example, she may try being explicit about the rules of the game to a player with fund-of-information deficits or other characteristics that make them less likely to be aware of how the game is played. The SLI may manoeuvre within the game to ensure one player gets more 'ball time' by being strategic about turn taking. Of course, interpreters may assess the game and judge that the players are evenly matched and decide that they can focus more on their language capital to ensure that the game is played as smoothly as possible. On other occasions, the cultural differences between the players may require the interpreter to employ a different expertise to highlight different perspectives to a client or explain behaviours that are culturally confusing.

In the example that Bailey (Entry 5) gives of a council meeting where she talks to the deaf attendees afterwards about how to manage subsequent meetings, her 'feel for the game' gives her power that she can impart to them. Proficient sportspersons may be able to bring many skills (capital) to the game, but sometimes interpreters may need to support a team mate so that they are able to play more strategically.

This metaphor is dynamic, malleable and allows for changes within a game, different settings and different constellations of capital. It offers the interpreter a picture of their own agency, and the agency of others and requires the interpreter to decide what type of team mate they are going to be. It also recognises that the setting, the rules of the

game and the players each have an impact on how the interpreter positions and repositions themselves within the game. A deliberate agential approach to interpreting requires a discourse in which SLIs can openly and transparently discuss their motivations, decisions and actions using language that allows them to be analytical and critical. Without these tools they may find themselves struggling to articulate their professional role and responsibilities and get tied up in inadequate metaphors and models.

I want to return to Foucault (1980) once again and the concept of power/knowledge. There is the potential for a new discourse to be a productive and creative power within the field of interpreting, rather than one that contains and restrains. Powerful and agentic actions seem to be being taken by SLIs, but the power/knowledge that surrounds them currently offers the professional 'truth' that their actions are illegitimate. The new knowledge that I am able to contribute to the field prompts the need for new discourses to develop. In addition to the team sport metaphor, I would also like to propose the discourse of *emancipatory interpreting*. This is a framework for thinking about the actions that SLIs in my study are already describing in their work and rationalising as part of their responsibilities, but which they currently under-scrutinize because of the surrounding inadequate discourse.

7.4 *Emancipatory Interpreting*

By focussing on Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to find a framework for analysing the reflections of the participants in the latter part of my research, I was able to notice an approach to interpreting in the practice of these SLIs which I have called *emancipatory interpreting*. The term is inspired by two sources: firstly, a model emanating from disability studies called emancipatory research and defined by Mike Oliver as follows "[t]he emancipatory paradigm, as the name implies, is about the facilitating of a politics of the possible by confronting social oppression at whatever levels it occurs" (Oliver, 1992, p.110). The model recognises that it is impossible to remain neutral or objective when researching oppression and requires the researcher to own their position. In so doing they are able to confront oppression. This resonates with the work of interpreters who, as I have established, cannot be neutral, impartial or invisible. By positioning themselves as against oppression they are able to become facilitators of a 'politics of the possible'. This does not mean that they free oppressed people, behaving as rescuers, but that they facilitate opportunities for greater empowerment or emancipation. Oliver defines the research paradigm further:

The issue then for the emancipatory research paradigm is not how to empower people but, once people have decided to empower themselves, precisely what research can then do to facilitate this process. This does then mean that the social relations of research production do have to be fundamentally changed; researchers have to learn how to put their knowledge and skills at the disposal of their research subjects, for them to use in whatever ways they choose. (Oliver 1992, p.111)

This fits well with interpreting work when a deaf signer has decided to empower themselves, an interpreter may be able to partner with them using an emancipatory approach to facilitate their empowerment. They can do this by using their own knowledge and skills to promote a more equitable set of power dynamics.

Secondly, the term *emancipatory interpreting* is inspired by Thompson's (2011) work on emancipatory social work practice (see section 2.5.1). Thompson defines this type of practice thus:

Emancipatory practice involves helping to set people free from:

- Discriminatory attitudes, values, actions and cultural assumptions;
- Structures of inequality and oppression both within organizations and in social order more broadly;
- The barriers of bad faith and alienation that stand in the way of empowerment and self-direction;
- Powerful ideologies and other social factors that limit opportunities and maintain the *status quo*; and
- Traditional practices which, although often based on good intentions, have the effect of maintaining inequalities and halting progress towards more appropriate forms of practice. (Thompson 2011, p.54)

He is clear that these ideals have to be considered realistically and that individual practitioners must walk a tight rope between “overambition and defeatism” (ibid 2011, p.53). For Thompson, his promotion of anti-discriminatory practice is a foundational aspect of emancipatory social work which is an umbrella term for forms of practice with the objective of promoting equality (Thompson 2011). Dominelli (2002) supports anti-oppressive practice, which is another form of emancipatory social work. Dominelli puts client agency at the centre of this practice so that power is shared and the “expert

knowledges and ways of working” are challenged (Dominelli 2002, pg. 84). Thompson argues that anti-discriminatory practice challenges oppression because oppression is one of the outcomes of discrimination (Thomson 2011, pg. 90). What is clear about both of these approaches is that they see both discrimination and oppression as occurring at different levels (see section 2.5.1 for Thompson’s PCS analysis) and need to be tackled holistically, not simply at an individualistic level.

My proposal has some overlap with the references to ‘emancipatory interpreting’ that Tipton and Furmanek (2016) use in their book *Dialogue Interpreting*. They promote the concept of emancipatory translation, coined by Chesterman (2005), because it encourages interpreters to be aware of the professional norms that they are surrounded by and to reflect on the ways in which they react to those norms. They encourage interpreters to make “informed judgements founded on advanced, research-based knowledge of domain-specific structures, protocols and language use applied to their own professional experiences” (Tipton & Furmanek 2016, p.277), in other words, they are promoting critical thinking in interpreting assignments. Chesterman (1997), the originator of the term, sees emancipatory translation in a more limited sense than I imagine it. He gives the example of neutralising gender in a translation, where the source text uses only the male gender, in order to be inclusive of women. I propose that this political positioning of the translator/interpreter goes beyond only the words used to the actions taken before, during and after the assignment. I can agree with Chesterman on this sentiment:

An emancipated translator assumes the right to break norms. But not irresponsibly: from the ethical point of view, norm-breaking must be justified by appeal to higher norms, which themselves are justified in terms of the values governing them. (Chesterman 1997, p.190)

Emancipatory interpreting is one style of interpreting that values social justice, equality of opportunity, is anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive. It recognises that some people are disempowered through no fault of their own. In using this terminology, I am promoting an existing discourse that can be found in the fields of critical pedagogy and social work in order that interpreting studies can begin to engage with it. The criticisms of Freire’s work discussed in section 2.5.5 must be acknowledged when considering an emancipatory approach to interpreting, particularly with regard to Blackburn’s (2000) predetermined paternalistic understandings of liberation. As with all fields of research, the concepts are always evolving and becoming more nuanced, which is an important

element of emancipatory practice. The definition of emancipation must always be constructed in dialogue with the oppressed people to whom it is being applied, and this needs to be further explored with regard to deaf signers and interpreting. Before discussing further the characteristics of this approach, I will describe how and why I came to identify this concept.

7.4.1 The ‘who?’ of Emancipatory Interpreting

From the outset of this research the type of SLI who committed to participate focused their reflections on instances in community interpreting settings. In the data tabulated in table 1 we can see that out of 47 reflections only six of them were instances where the deaf signer was a professional. Examples of interpreters working with deaf signing professionals were rarely included. The descriptive information tabulated in table 4, reveal that 24 of the 47 reflections included deaf signers with additional characteristics that had the potential to make them more vulnerable (for example a fund-of-information deficit, being originally from another country and not having fluent BSL, needing a personal assistant). Having noticed this in the initial analysis, latterly I decided to categorise the 47 reflections broadly in terms of whether the interpreter was attempting an *emancipatory approach* in the assignment or not. I will go on to describe in detail what this approach entails, however for brevity here I analysed the reflections for when SLIs describe taking action to facilitate opportunities for empowerment of the deaf signer, these are categorised as using an *emancipatory approach*. Of the 47 reflections I judged 28 to contain descriptions of using an emancipatory approach at some point in the assignment, leaving 19 that do not describe this type of approach. Within the 28 who described using an emancipatory approach, 19 of them made reference to the deaf signer having an intersecting characteristic that made them more vulnerable. Of the 19 not using this emancipatory approach only 6 deaf signers had a characteristic that had the potential to make them more vulnerable. There appears to be an intriguing pattern here between deaf signing clients with intersecting characteristics and an approach to interpreting that focuses on emancipatory aims. I need to emphasize here that whether the SLI was successful in their emancipatory aim or not is debatable, however they appear to be prioritising this value in their work in their descriptions. It is also important to note that there may only have been one instance in an assignment when the SLI describes aiming for something I categorise as emancipatory (in the rest of the assignment the interpreter may not describe this approach again) and in other reflections the entire reflection presents this aim (i.e. the whole assignment involved emancipatory interpreting). The

point of counting the numbers of reflections in which this type of *emancipatory interpreting* was attempted and cross-referencing it with more vulnerable deaf signers was to determine whether there was even a tentative relationship, something I feel it is possible to say that there is. I will now go on to describe the *emancipatory approach* in more detail.

7.4.2 The ‘how?’ of Emancipatory Interpreting

The concept of emancipatory interpreting requires careful evaluation of all the elements of the assignment to judge whether the deaf signer is potentially disempowered, and whether the hearing client is ignorant of their hearing privilege and unaware of the barriers they are building. It also requires a judgement about the consequences of the assignment that they are working in, what the outcome will be if the deaf signer remains disempowered. To engage Bourdieu’s terminology again (see section 2.2.2 – 2.2.5), SLIs must take into account the field that they find themselves in and the expectation of power dynamics within that field. Different fields or domains uphold different discourses of power, for example a medical appointment sustains a discourse in which the doctor holds power due to their expertise and gatekeeping capacities. Likewise, in a social work setting in which an independent reviewing officer is determining whether a couple can adequately take care of their child, a discourse and a system of power controls the assessment being made. In these settings interpreters must understand the imposed discourses of procedural power which all of the participants must obey, as well as the audist discourses that may influence judgments about the abilities of a deaf couple to parent versus counter-discourses which may only be accepted by some of the people in the room. Interpreters also need to understand the ‘rules of the game’ being played in that field and the expectations about behaviour, prior-knowledge, deference and language use that need to be met for the outcome to be successful. They need to have or gain some understanding of what capital is brought to the field by each interactant. They then have to judge whether the deaf signer’s habitus allows them to navigate this interaction successfully or not. This complex set of judgements appears to be something that SLIs perform on a regular basis. SLIs sometimes try to influence the structural and cultural levels of power (see section 2.5.1 for Thompson’s PCS analysis) by offering alternative epistemologies and anti-audist perspectives for the hearing participants to integrate into their own practice, or by empowering deaf signers with knowledge about processes and practices. In various reflections, practitioners take time prior to appointments to inform clients about how to work with an interpreter but also by giving background information

about working with a deaf signer. SLIs showed in section 6.3.6, a desire to transform unjust systems, not simply working at an individualistic level but influencing a culturally oppressive process or combating structural ignorance.

The lack of capital that some deaf signers have can be as a result of audist practices (including educational, social and cultural – see section 2.4.1). Additionally, for those who carry intersecting characteristics there is the likelihood that they have less capacity to feel empowered and to act in appropriate ways to gain power in the field that they are in. Some of these more vulnerable individuals may match Ladd’s (2013) description of a subaltern deaf person (see section 2.4.3), in which their low literacy levels make them less able to access the hegemonic language of English-speaking/hearing culture though, as I argued, the intersection of other vulnerable characteristics complicates this picture and widens the potential for subalternity. As discussed in 2.4.2, it is thought that language dysfluency, mental health concerns and a deficit in the fund-of-information have a higher prevalence amongst deaf signers. The intersecting factors can make them more vulnerable to being oppressed by others and to losing their ‘voice’ (or ability to express themselves). To repeat the words of one of the participants, Alex (see section 5.2.1) who says, “But I think what we do do, which is REALLY powerful, is to give that [deaf signing] person LITERALLY a voice.” (Alex, debrief 12:08 emphasis in original). Sometimes the literal act of interpreting into spoken English the words of the deaf signer is enough to empower them. Though it must be noted that some deaf signers do choose to speak using their own voice (Napier, Young & Oram 2017), perhaps for reasons of self-empowerment and to exert control over situations they are in because they have the capacity to use the hegemonic language. And yet, not only are deaf signers hindered by Baumann’s phonocentrism (see 2.4.1) in which the spoken word is privileged above other forms of communication, sometimes giving someone a voice is about managing the interaction so that a deaf signer can have their say (by coordinating the turn-taking for example). This directly connects to the hearing privilege of people who may not understand that a deaf signer may not, or cannot, interrupt conversations with their voice in quite the same way that hearing speakers can, in order to take the floor in a conversation. Structurally audist practices contribute to silencing the figurative voice of deaf signers because they can create barriers for deaf signers to learning a fully accessible language, to receiving a fully accessible education (which gives them full access to the hegemonic language) and to full access to society. All of these factors seem to activate in SLIs the potential to behave in emancipatory ways.

The values that are upheld in *emancipatory interpreting* are those that were unearthed in section 6.2: empowering a marginalised client, promoting a deaf signer's autonomy and social justice. On recognition that a deaf signer is being marginalised a SLI may choose to employ certain strategies to empower that client. By advocating, interrupting to clarify, explaining to a hearing client some context that may help them to be more inclusive or educating a hearing client about communication strategies (the list of strategies I give here is not exhaustive), SLIs promote – not necessarily an equal power dynamic – but a better opportunity for the marginalised client to express themselves. One, perhaps extreme, example is the SLI who narrated having to shout to ensure the deafblind signer's point of view was heard.

Another characteristic of *emancipatory interpreting* is the engagement of partnering traits, described in sections 6.3.5 - 6.3.7. The overarching theme of partnering traits is to work towards the liberation of marginalised deaf signers. The SLIs essentially choose to ally with the deaf client and partner with them to promote access, respect and inclusion. Admittedly, SLIs are not always at liberty to discuss with deaf signers whether they want them to work in this emancipatory way due to the challenges of dysfluency, mental health problems, disabilities, and time constraints among other factors, so they have to judge whether this would be something that the deaf signing client would benefit from and appreciate and create opportunities for knowledge-sharing or turn-taking, which the deaf signer can take up if they wish. These may be turned down for various reasons and that needs to be respected as well. They may choose to prioritise social justice and access for these clients even though opportunities for critical dialogue, in the Freirean sense, may be limited. On the other hand, sometimes moments arise when SLIs can suggest a way in which a client might deal with a situation that allows the deaf signer to be more in control, and that is a type of critical dialogue. This emancipatory approach offers a discourse for thinking critically about how to approach work with oppressed and disempowered clients and scrutinizing the line between emancipatory actions and potentially disempowering and patronising actions.

Emancipatory interpreting is aligned with the values of Freire's model of working with oppressed people. It cannot, however, fully engage with critical pedagogy in line with community development work. SLIs have *ad hoc* opportunities to facilitate critical dialogues on occasions and as bilinguals, bridging the gap between majority culture and minority culture, they have a unique position from which they can choose to be agents of change. Depending on many factors they may choose to act in an emancipatory way with certain deaf people that they work with, and my research suggests that they often describe

attempting to do just that. I would argue that this style of interpreting is a reaction to the oppressive, audist behaviours and structural barriers that SLIs see deaf signers facing on a regular basis. Though SLIs are not community developers in the strict sense, Freire's contribution has a lot to offer because it distinguishes behaviours that are truly partnering from the more oppressive, though on the surface 'helpful', behaviours of the well-intentioned but as yet uncritical agent. One question that arises out of these observations is whether the current professional discourse that surrounds these important judgements and consequent actions is sophisticated enough for SLIs to be able to critically reflect on whether they are appropriate or not?

It is important to state that SLIs may choose another set of values to guide their work, which may, for example, legitimately prioritise faithfulness to the message above emancipatory goals. Not every setting requires an emancipatory approach and SLIs need to be critically aware of when they choose to employ this approach to interpreting.

7.5 The Combination of Problematic Discourse and an Emancipatory Approach

Bahadir (2010) focuses on the precarious positioning of interpreters in asylum and refugee contexts as well as war zones where there is a disempowered client or 'subaltern' (see section 2.6.3). She maintains that interpreters who take action, like the interpreters in my study, must "take on the burden of their articulations" (Bahadir, 2010, p.132) because if they do not they will burn out or suffer from 'helper syndrome'. The pitfalls to attempting an emancipatory approach uncritically revealed themselves in this study. An analysis of oppressor traits revealed that SLIs can fall into the 'rescuer' role, something akin to helper syndrome. It also revealed discomfort, second-guessing of motives and actions and contradictory narratives. Amongst the oppressor traits I was able to witness manifestations of possessive consciousness, pejorative and paternalistic attitudes, defensive posturing coming from a place of hearing privilege and finally a desire for approval (see section 5.3.1 to 5.3.4). Although these traits did not saturate the reflections, the fact that there was even some evidence of them points to the potential for this to be a problem amongst the profession more generally.

Having presented on this topic at an Association for Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) conference in September 2017, I can confidently say that many attendees spoke to me appreciatively about their recognition of oppressor traits which leads me to suppose that should I present on the topic of *emancipatory interpreting* it might also resonate with SLIs (though I have no evidence for this as yet). It is important to state then that the

proposition of this emancipatory approach must be carefully considered because if used in the wrong circumstances it could be oppressive; there is a fine line between advocacy and paternalism (Zomorodi & Foley, 2009). This relates back to Oliver's (1992) statement about emancipatory research not being a vehicle for empowering people, only (once people have begun to empower themselves) the researcher finds ways to facilitate that empowerment (see section 7.3). This requires a professional discourse that allows for a deeply reflective and critical practice.

All of the SLIs who were recruited to my study were involved in supervisory activities (see section 3.3.7) and we can expect that they have developed some level of reflective practice in their work. The chances are that among SLIs who are perhaps less aware of these issues and have less experience of reflecting critically, these oppressor traits may be even more prevalent. Every SLI who participated in my research had undergone some university training. Mapson (2014) tentatively extrapolated from a survey conducted in 2013/14 that 65% of the interpreters who took part had had some university-based education (see section 1.1 for further details on this route to qualification). By surveying the Signature/NVQ requirements and a newer route to an interpreting qualification through iBSL (who are a UK awarding body for diplomas in BSL and interpreting following the National Occupational Standards), it is clear that both the Signature and iBSL routes require a focus on sign linguistics, language ability and the transfer of information, the role of the interpreter with regard to the code of conduct and the practicalities of interpreting in different modes. There is some expectation that practitioners will be reflective, but the focus is again on the information transfer, accuracy and some cultural issues. There is no reference to training on audism or historical oppression in their materials. It would appear that this type of training does not ensure awareness raising about the minority status of deaf signers and the oppressive systems they encounter daily. There is no research into the content of each individual provider's courses however, therefore it is impossible to know for certain that these elements are missing.

It is equally difficult to assess the University routes because there is no research on this and the curricula are not accessible. However, my own involvement in two different routes to qualification, one over 15 years ago which no longer exists and one in the current context reveal that there is teaching on aspects of audism, oppressive structures and issues related to power incorporated into the teaching of interpreters. Therefore, if all of the SLIs involved in my research had had some university-based training then they could have been exposed to teaching, beyond a superficial level, on

issues related to power, discrimination and oppressive practices. If these individuals represent only 65% of the profession and their discourse is problematic then it is highly likely that the other 35% of the profession have similar, if not more, difficulties with the challenges of reflecting on power dynamics.

Every SLI involved in my research said that they took part in either supervisory group meetings and/or had a professional mentor or supervisor (see table 2). This encouraging demographic information shows that they are in the habit of discussing their work, in some format, regularly. Currently the profession promotes supervisory relationships and encourages reflective practice though they are not mandatory. The qualifications of those supervising are not specified however and peer supervisory groups while beneficial could be mired in the problematic professional discourses that seem to abound. Therefore, there are significant potential pitfalls when navigating the complex nature of power dynamics for the professional interpreter. Without the appropriate, nuanced language to discuss power dynamics the possibility that emancipatory aims could manifest as oppressive aims is undoubtedly there.

This research set out to look at hearing privilege in SLIs but widened the scope of the study in order to look more broadly at SLIs' conceptualisations of power dynamics. In applying the framework of oppressor traits to my analysis I was able to search for manifestations of hearing privilege and hearing fragility. Hearing privilege, or versions thereof, have been discussed sparingly in Deaf studies by Bauman (2000), Eckert and Rowley (2013) and Tuccoli (2008) (see section 2.4.2). Hearing privilege, particularly in the United States, has been used, at times, as a finger to point at offending interpreter practitioners when they are not behaving in ways that deaf signers feel are appropriate. When this is done, without the offer of critical dialogue, it merely blames and shames. My decision to focus more on concepts arising out of Freire's work was based on a desire to offer a new discourse to the field of interpreting. Freire's discourse promotes partnership and transparency, and though it presents oppressor traits which could potentially be used to blame and shame, I offer it here as a lens for looking at behaviours humbly, critically and hopefully in dialogue with those under oppression. I deal later (under limitations in section 7.7) with the need to broaden this research to include deaf signers in critical dialogue about what this study has unearthed.

Applying an *emancipatory approach* as though it were a prescriptive set of rules is not my intention. I have labelled this approach because it appears to be something that SLIs are doing or attempting to do but wary of talking about, therefore in order to make space for it in the professional discourse it could be useful to name it. However, there is

a danger in naming it because it could then become a label for a set of behaviours that SLIs want to justify when in fact these behaviours in one context could be oppressive in another. The point of practicing *emancipatory interpreting* is, crucially, that it requires an assessment of the specific circumstances that the SLI is encountering, each and every time they practice their profession. Not only does it require an assessment of the power dynamics that surround the deaf person and their relative empowerment or disempowerment, but it also requires an assessment of the hearing clients' relative power and the field they are in as well. Furthermore, intersectional discrimination will be a part of those power dynamics (see section 2.3.6). Perhaps the hearing client has an intellectual disability that is clear from the outset, or a hidden disability that only becomes apparent within the communicative process, or maybe the deaf signer is gay or black. In certain situations, all of these characteristics will make a difference to the power dynamic, in others they may not. We cannot, however, expect the SLI to be an omniscient mind-reader, but a reasonable amount of sensitivity and awareness to these factors is an important competency to have if they want to be attuned to power dynamics. Importantly, the SLI also needs to be aware of their own relative power, not only as an interpreter, but as a man or woman, white or racialised, gay or straight etc... A SLI's own set of intersectional characteristics could make them more vulnerable in a given context and have an impact on the work they do, for better or for worse.

The framework of oppressor traits and partnering traits together gives more scope for seeing a scale of behaviours leaving room for more open discussion and flexibility to analyse agency and positioning. The approach of *emancipatory interpreting* that I am proposing offers a framework for SLIs to consider their actions when they recognise a dynamic of disempowerment. Crucially, *emancipatory interpreting* requires learning a discourse of power that allows for critical dialogue and reflection so that interpreters practice mindfully.

7.6 Contributions

In this second part of the chapter I turn my focus to the contributions that I see my research making to theory, methodology and professional practice.

7.6.1 Theoretical Contributions

This research has integrated theories of power with interpreting studies research. By theorising power using Foucault and Bourdieu I have explored techniques of power, the language and discourse of power and concepts of habitus, capital and field and applied

them to interpreting. Some of these elements have been considered previously (Inghilleri 2005, Angelelli 2004, Bahadir 2010, Mason and Ren 2012), however the focus that I have chosen differs from all of these examples. My focus has been on the cultural-linguistic minority deaf signer, their position of disempowerment and the juxtaposition of the powerful hearing interpreter who is a member of the dominant majority. The awareness, or not, of this juxtaposition impacts on the self-positioning of the interpreter. I am able to make claims about a style of interpreting that emerges from the data that I have termed *emancipatory interpreting*. Emancipatory interpreting is characterised by a set of values that guide the interpreter's decision-making and coordinating or disrupting strategies as a consequence of judging the signer to be a subaltern or disempowered individual. An emancipatory approach also seeks to open dialogue with deaf signers to evaluate whether they want to empower themselves and how they might work together to facilitate this empowerment, this aspect of the approach seems crucial for the avoidance of oppressive traits.

By applying the work of Freire (1970) in my analysis of the narratives of the SLIs I have been able to uncover behavioural traits that stem from the habitus of the SLI. This approach, which was sparked by the work of Baker-Shenk (1986) and developed further, provided me with a mechanism to step back from the narratives of the SLIs and look for underlying expressions of sometimes unconscious values or behaviours. This type of analysis has not been attempted previously and there are methodological implications, which I will discuss below. The development of partnering traits, as an accompaniment to Baker-Shenk's oppressor characteristics, evolved from my own reading of Freire. The partnering traits resonated with me as something that SLIs probably manifested and the integration of this framework into the narrative analysis proved useful in characterising a set of behaviours that were being described by the SLIs anecdotally. Partnering traits represent an important collection of attitudes and behaviours that can be expressed by interpreters when they judge that a disempowered deaf signer is not gaining equal or fair access. When activated they can prompt the use of various coordinating or disrupting strategies that are designed to change the power dynamic.

My research has looked at some practical examples of how hearing privilege is expressed through oppressor traits. Eckert and Rowley (2013) hint at the manifestation of hearing privilege in the work of SLIs citing one example (see section 2.4.2), however, I have been able to show that interpreters can also manifest this in other ways. Though the concept of hearing privilege has been widely discussed by practitioners in the US on

professional blogs like Street Leverage¹⁶, the discussions have not been based on any research study but only on practitioner's anecdotal observations and experience. Therefore, this research is able to contribute to that gap in the field. I have also suggested that the term 'hearing fragility', which refers to the defence mechanism that hearing people use to manage discomfort and disequilibrium when confronted with the oppression of deaf people (see section 2.3.5), is something that has relevance for Deaf studies and evidence of this was also revealed in some reflections by SLIs.

7.6.2 Methodological Innovations

It is important to highlight some of the methodological innovations I am able to contribute through my research. Firstly, though interpreters' solicited diary data collection has been used before in interpreting studies (Dickinson 2010), the analytical approach of applying narrative inquiry and CDA to this data has not previously been utilised. In this aspect of the methods I have forged a new path within the interpreting studies field. In utilising this method, I hope I have been able to humanise interpreters, valuing their voices. More often in interpreting studies we see the analysis of interpreters' working outputs being analysed, rather than hearing from them about their conceptualisations of their job. In presenting their nuanced ways of thinking, their desires, dilemmas and doubts, I envisage they will be given some weight within the academic sphere. Significantly, too, the impact that their personhood has on the interpreting process becomes apparent. Research by Angelelli (2004) on spoken language interpreters and Dickinson (2010), Brunson (2011) and Napier (2011) on signed language interpreters gives a voice to interpreters by conducting interviews and focus groups or using journals to explore their concerns. Of the studies done with SLIs, Dickinson's was an ethnographic study, Brunson's is an institutional ethnography approach and Napier's takes a narrative perspective, looking at how SLIs talk about their work. Employing a thematic analysis and content analysis, Napier compares the understandings of deaf service-users, hearing service-users and interpreters around similar concepts. The strength of my study on the SLIs' individual written and spoken stories, through 47 reflections and 9 debrief interviews, is that it allows for a more nuanced and in-depth analysis of their perceptions about power. By removing, to some extent, the immediate observer so that the SLIs could write about their assignments in their own time, I hoped to collect candid reflections from the participants. They were not

¹⁶ Streetleverage is a blog and vlog on issues related to signed language interpreting in the US <https://streetleverage.com/>

censored by any focus group peer interaction and only after they had submitted their reflections did they then discuss them with me. This dynamic reduced my influence over their narratives, but then allowed for a co-constructed narrative latterly, which served to confirm their contributions and open critical dialogue about their experiences.

7.6.3 Contribution to Professional Practice

This study has concluded that the professional discourse around issues of power is inadequate. This finding in itself might not be considered a contribution but it does highlight a gap in knowledge. The contribution that can be made to the profession is a framework for thinking about *emancipatory interpreting*, proposed in this chapter (section 7.4). First and foremost, this approach makes a space for a specific type of interpreting practice in the profession and makes it a valid choice. SLIs already enact the behaviours in this approach but often in a conflicted way. Using an emancipatory approach needs to be considered carefully, and wherever possible in partnership with a deaf signer. Instead of applying these techniques in a covert manner, and possibly denying them when reflecting, this approach allows for open discussion about how and when it is appropriate to employ them. This framework has the potential to promote a new discourse, one that encourages critical reflection and offers the Freirean concepts of oppressor and partnering traits. Importantly, this discourse is adamant that interpreters accept their agency and take responsibility for their positioning.

Interpreter role paradigms, other than the conduit metaphor, have been descriptive – ‘bi-lingual-bi-cultural interpreter’, ‘communication facilitator’, ‘cultural mediator’, ‘quantum interpreting’ – and it appears that these have not been absorbed as easily into the minds of practitioners as the foundational conduit metaphor. It is possible that the conduit metaphor has been so tenacious because of its visual and metaphoric nature, which has more power to govern thoughts and structure perceptions (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003; Schaffer 2013). In this sense metaphors make up part of a discourse of power that can remain invisible in our everyday experience. The proposal of a new metaphor of interpreting for the profession, that of a team sport metaphor that recognises power structures as a vital part of the practice alongside language transfer and cultural expertise, has the potential to promote more creative and critical thinking in the profession. It promotes breaking away from the rigidity of an old, prescriptive model. If this metaphor is introduced to the interpreting profession it has the potential to promote more agentic discussions about their practice.

One other contribution, which is important to mention, is that as a result of my communication with the Scottish Association for Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI) subcommittee who developed an updated *Principles of Professional Practice* document, the following statement has been incorporated:

Respect

We will respect the individuality, the right to self-determination, the autonomy, the language and/or communication preference of the people with whom we work. *We will be aware of the longstanding power structures which often disadvantage Deaf people.* We will not discriminate against the protected characteristics. (SASLI Principles of Practice, 2018, *italics mine*)

The sentence in italics is one that I co-produced with SASLI for the purposes of recognising inequalities and systemic discrimination. This contribution to the profession makes transparent the importance of recognising structural disadvantage.

7.7 Limitations

I will now consider the limitations of my research and focus in particular on the generalisability of the research findings, the parts of the research jigsaw that I was unable to integrate into my research, the validity of the methods and an acknowledgement of a missing voice.

7.7.1 Reading Between the Lines

What this research has not been able to do is analyse reflections from all interpreters in the UK. This study does not pretend to offer a representative sample of the conceptualisations of SLIs of power dynamics in the UK. By employing narrative inquiry, I offer a snapshot of how SLIs conceptualise power dynamics through the stories of ten SLIs. These stories have been analysed in order to uncover how they manage power, social injustice and their own hearing privilege. The resonances that are expressed by other SLIs who have listened to a presentation or been in dialogue with me have affirmed my sense that these stories are unlikely to be exceptions. This is also confirmed by the many blogs that are being written by SLIs, particularly in the US, about issues of power and positioning.

This research has also not been able to analyse what the interpreters did not say and did not do. Neither have I been able to observe what SLIs actually do in practice. This was a conscious decision taken early in the research and matched my research

questions regarding their conceptualisation of power dynamics. I asked SLIs to write about times when they noticed power dynamics. I did not ask them to write about unremarkable power dynamics. It is entirely possible that instances where SLIs find the power dynamics unremarkable are also instances when they are completely blind to them, and where other interactants, particularly deaf signers, may be struck by notable dynamics. For this reason, the research is limited because it relies entirely on the SLIs' perceptions of what to write about.

This research has responded to an urgency that I have felt to make transparent the fact that power dynamics are inevitable and that SLIs are managing them on a daily basis. This was something I experienced in my own practice and felt unprepared to deal with by my training. It also stemmed from my own discomfort, when I was practicing as an interpreter, at the lack of a framework for discussing the dilemmas that arose for a SLI when the code of professional practice came into conflict with values of social justice. Giving space for these stories makes them important. As Chase writes, “[m]any narrative researchers hope their work will stimulate dialogue about complex moral matters and about the need for social change” (Chase 2011, p.428). I also hope that through using narrative analysis I have been able to “challenge, protest, and reconstruct” (Young and Temple 2014, p.107) the discourse that SLIs are using to talk about power.

7.7.2 Interpreting Interpreters

The strata of interpretations, or “collaborative stories” (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, p.12), that I have built into this research resemble something of a layer cake of analysis. I began with the stories of the SLIs who generously shared their insights into power dynamics in their work lives. Their reflections are socially constructed stories of one perspective of an interpreting assignment. The first layer of interpretation involved critical discourse analysis to probe the discourse about power. The second layer of interpretation focussed on their concept of agency and techniques of power. In the third iteration I used Freire’s framework to home in on oppressive power structures. All of this was governed by my perspectives, via my habitus, and the theoretical grounding that I chose. One might propose that all of these interpretations give cause for concern about the validity of my research.

Hammersley gives a useful definition in which validity “means the correspondence between the claim and the phenomena to which it relates” (Hammersley 1992, p.199). In order to check the validity of my interpretations I asked various people to read my chapters as they were being constructed. In addition to my two supervisors, I

asked hearing signed language interpreters, hearing academics, deaf signing academics and a deaf interpreter to read results chapters and to give me their perspectives on my narratives. Additionally, I discussed the notion of *emancipatory interpreting* with academic colleagues. The majority of them fed back positively about my interpretation of the reflections and debrief interviews. Where they queried interpretations, I considered their feedback and incorporated it into my writing. Their feedback has strengthened the validity of my study. Furthermore, I have presented some of the research findings at a national conference to signed language interpreters (ASLI conference 2017) and received affirming feedback there as well. I am therefore able to present this work with the sense that it corresponds, to use Hammersley's term, with the phenomenon that I am studying.

One set of feedback given by an interpreter-academic offered a reading of the results chapters, which framed power dynamics using rapport-management theory (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). This reading was a valid interpretation of the reflections from a subfield of linguistics called pragmatics. Pragmatics focuses on language-use in context, which is one lens for analysing power dynamics in action. The sociological framework that I have used to research power dynamics offers a different lens by focusing on SLIs' conceptualisations of power dynamics rather than on the observable strategies they are using in a given assignment. This highlights the contribution that my research makes to an area of interpreting studies, which should complement other research about the same phenomenon. Hopefully, these different perspectives can create opportunities for critical dialogue in the future. In order to triangulate my research findings, it would be useful, in a future research project, to observe whether SLIs do in fact enact the techniques that they describe using to manage power dynamics. This would serve to strengthen or question my results and encourage further critical debate around these issues.

7.7.3 Critical Dialogue

In a dialogue there are two articulations, two points of view. This is valued in Freire's work and it is something that I value as a researcher. However, it will be apparent that the perspective of deaf signers, whom I have established as an oppressed minority, is not included in my research and this remains an obvious limitation. There are no deaf signers' stories in which we might see a counter-narrative that sheds light on oppressor traits or partnering traits. As was discussed earlier in my section on positionality (see section 3.2), I put forward my reasoning for deciding not to do this, namely that as a hearing researcher I am not positioned well to collect the perspectives of deaf signers, particularly in relation to issues of power dynamics between hearing SLIs and their

stakeholders. The impact of this decision on my study is that the perspectives that are given priority in this academic setting are not counterbalanced by another valuable and critical set of perspectives. Therefore, this study must be read with this in mind and future research projects would benefit from garnering the views of deaf signers about their perceptions of power dynamics in interpreted situations. I did, however, ask four deaf signers in the academy to read elements of my research at different times and I took into consideration their perspectives, as was mentioned above.

A criticism of Freire's work is its paternalistic perception of oppressed minorities and the binary nature of oppression (see section 2.5.2). Blackburn (2000) reminds me:

...any pre-determined vision of liberation introduced from the outside is ultimately paternalistic, since it presupposes that the oppressed are incapable of determining their own endogenously produced vision of liberation. (Blackburn 2000, p.12)

I understand that what I perceive to be empowering or emancipatory may not be the same as the perceptions of another stakeholder in the process. In further research I would envisage finding out how deaf signing stakeholders of interpreting services perceive emancipatory action and mutually empowering work with interpreters as this is a key piece of the puzzle in understanding power dynamics.

7.8 Reflexive retrospective

In the methods and methodology chapter (section 4.2), I set about positioning myself as the researcher, attempting to situate myself, and describe what made up my habitus with the intention of being transparent. This is an attempt to bring myself "into the research process self-consciously" (Cousin 2013, pg. 4) recognising that I am a tool within my own research. As such, I recognise that I use the frameworks that I have grown up with (and inside of) to understand social realities and to construct that understanding (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Without going over that ground again, I intend in this section to bookend this process of reflection and reflexivity with a retrospective look at how my positionality helped and hindered me; how it made the research possible and hid possibilities from me.

One aspect of this research that has been difficult to grapple with has been that the reflective journals were written for me (see section 5.1.2). The SLIs were not writing

for themselves about their experiences, they were writing for a researcher. Some participants showed a level of self-consciousness when we discussed their first reflection on the phone, asking if their journal was alright or not, revealing their need for validation from me. I remember that Francis was particularly keen to tell me that she wanted to write about power dynamics that were equal and therefore less noticeable which revealed her own agenda within my research agenda. The way in which they wrote was a representation of how they wanted me to see them. They gave rationales for their actions and these rationales were presented to me. Sometimes they presented narratives that aligned with their professional code, sometimes they presented counter-narratives and often they appeared conflicted. They quite possibly gave what they perceived to be the 'best' version of why they acted in a particular way, rather than their most honest version. It occurs to me now that the researcher effects go beyond the potential 'observer's paradox' which I attempted to mitigate through the use of reflective journals (see section 4.4.4 for a discussion on naturalistic data). My effect, though invisible to the extent that I was not physically present except in the interviews, was sustained by the fact that I was still an audience for their writing and that had consequences on their narratives. I must claim, therefore, that I am present in the data.

A further consideration for me was the impact of language on this study. In sections 5.2.2 to 5.2.5 and in section 7.3 of this chapter I discuss metaphors of power at length. I experience these metaphors in particular ways, informed by my own visualisations of what they mean. Sometimes in the debriefs and in my scoping study SLIs signed some of these metaphorical concepts and these had an impact on my interpretation of the English version as well. The sign used when discussing the concept of balance is interesting because it presents to the receiver two open palms, moving up and down in direct opposition to each other, like a seesaw or weighing scales. However, unlike a weighing scales, when someone is more powerful, they are given the upper position (not the lower, heavier position) so that the more power one has, the more height one has. This example shows how the metaphor of power im/balance is visualised in my mind and this impacts on my interpretation. Furthermore, I am not able to break away from using metaphors of power myself, because they are the metaphors of everyday language. They offer ways of talking about a concept that we are all able to relate to. If they were not commonly used the SLIs would not have been able to convey meaning to me. This is the paradox of narrative analysis: people use language to tell stories, those stories are explored to elucidate how people conceptualise their worlds, but the very language of their stories also limits their understandings and mine. I concur with

Cousin's statement that "(l)anguage is not a neutral, stable medium by which we can identify social phenomena; rather, it is part of the act of interpretation and generative of a way of seeing and talking about something" (2013, pg. 6). I am therefore present in the data *and* a tool for interpreting the data in a specific way.

To take language a step further, as a trained SLI, I have knowledge of the discourses of neutrality and impartiality. I am aware of the conduit model of interpreting and its continued significance in the way that interpreters think about and frame themselves. I am, in some senses, still caught up in this discourse despite a scholarly knowledge that this metaphor for interpreting is an unrealistic representation of the practice of interpreting and not backed up by the evidence we currently have. As a discursive construction, it disguises the agency of SLIs and protects them from having to be responsible for their professional decisions. This discursive legacy within the profession and in the field of translation and interpreting studies, to a degree (see sections 7.2 and 7.3.2), has been a source of frustration and a place of entrapment for me. I am hopeful that each step taken towards revealing the stronghold of this metaphor is a step closer to understanding the task of the interpreter in more nuanced and more dynamic terms.

It is also important to be transparent about the fact that I have chosen extracts from the data and represented them for the reader to see. I have not represented every reflection because I have judged some reflections uninteresting or unrevealing of elements of power that I want to interrogate. I have a political standpoint from which I view and evaluate the data I have collected and I have a research agenda aligned with social justice (see section 4.2 for further details). This thesis is therefore a joint construction of how SLIs conceptualise power, through the lens of both the SLIs and through my own conceptualisation of power. I therefore want to borrow Mauthner and Doucet's description of their own research as "situated, partial, developmental and modest" (2003, pg 424) and apply it to my own, recognising that my account is one among an infinite number of other possible accounts. My hope is that others will add other perspectives to this contribution.

7.9 Recommendations

As I approach the end of this chapter my intention is to make recommendations for further research and training. I have already suggested some areas for further research earlier on in this chapter and I repeat those here and propose others.

7.9.1 Recommendations for Further Research

Firstly, I propose further research on the views of deaf signing stakeholders about the emancipatory approach to interpreting. A publication called *Deaf Eyes on Interpreting* edited by Holcomb and Smith is due to come out in June 2018 and will present the views of deaf signing professionals who regularly use interpreters. This will be a welcome addition to the minimal information about deaf signing stakeholders. The next step in my research would be to collaborate with a deaf researcher to collect data with deaf stakeholders of interpreter services to discover their perspectives on power dynamics.

I also suggested that it would be important to carry out research which observes SLIs using techniques for managing power dynamics as this would help to provide evidence to either support the descriptions of those techniques in my research or critique them further. This type of evidence would help to build a fuller picture of the observable reality of interpreting practices and power dynamics.

Additionally, I see value in going back to the SLIs who participated in my research to share the findings with them to see how they respond to the analysis and proposals I have made. This would contribute to closing the circle of interpretations and allow for frank discussion and critical dialogue about power. By checking whether my analysis resonates with them I would gain an opportunity to take the analysis further, adjust interpretations that do not match their conceptualisation and open up discussions on power. This has the potential to impact on practice as well as on scholarly work and it could further empower SLIs to reflect critically. I had initially considered a participatory action research framework but found that the time and resources required to thoroughly do this were not available to me. Participatory action research prioritises the empowerment of people using their expertise and collaboration and is especially suited to challenging power inequalities (Miller & Brewer 2003). This could be well suited to working with SLIs (see Wurm & Napier 2017) to take forward research into power dynamics and scrutinise further the proposed emancipatory interpreting framework.

Having had the opportunity to receive feedback on my research from a deaf signer who is a qualified interpreter (known as Deaf Interpreters or DIs) it would be valuable to extend this to include more DIs. DIs are often hired to work with particularly disempowered clients; for example dysfluent signers, immigrant deaf signers or deaf signers with mental health problems (Adam, Aro, Druetta, Dunne and Klintberg 2014). Therefore, by sharing the framework of *emancipatory interpreting* with more DIs, I could learn from them whether this is something that they are engaged in themselves.

Further research into the concept of critical reflection would also be beneficial both academically and professionally. The response that I received from nine of the ten SLIs who participated was that writing reflections was a valuable professional development exercise that made them even more aware of power dynamics than they had previously been. This aspect of the study was intriguing, because there was no critical dialogue involved, but awareness was raised despite that. Combined with an improved reflective discourse this could potentially have implications for continuing professional development for SLIs and training programmes for interpreters.

7.9.2 Recommendations for Interpreter Training

In 2015 the National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters (NUBSLI) carried out a survey of working conditions of SLIs. About a half of the NRCPD register responded (which amounts to approximately 500 SLIs) and of them, 50% said that they were considering leaving the profession. Though there are no categorical statistics to prove that retention issues in the profession are linked to uncertainty about role and responsibilities, it is the case that in a small follow up survey of SLIs in 2016 by NUBSLI the third highest rated reason was “burnout and exhaustion from the work” (NUBSLI 2016, p.9). According to the NUBSLI report this included the emotional impact of the work. Of the 79 interpreters who responded to this survey 33% of them listed this as one of the factors contributing to them planning to leave the profession. This is as far as the analysis goes.

Bahadir (2010) warns about the potential for burnout when she discusses the positioning of spoken language interpreters particularly in relation to asylum and refugee contexts. Though SLIs are not necessarily working with these disempowered groups the power inequalities are similar at times and have the potential to cause unresolvable conflicts particularly for an interpreter who feels bound to a code of conduct that is prescriptive and mechanistic. Thompson (2011) addresses burnout and stress as potential consequences of working with oppressed minorities in social work settings. He believes that it is important to recognise this potential struggle because disillusionment with continued work against oppression is a real threat to the profession.

In response to these threats to retention in the field of signed language interpreting, it would be beneficial not only to research this further but also to embed training for SLIs (trainees and registered SLIs) with in-depth teaching on the following concepts:

- definitions of power
- Freire's ideas stemming from *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and in particular concepts of oppressor and partnering traits as well as critical dialogue
- agentic metaphors of the interpreter's role and responsibilities
- discussions about whether there is a place for *emancipatory interpreting*
- reflective practice

7.9.3 Recommendations for Policy

In order for SLIs to embrace their agency and take responsibility for ethical decision-making, the codes of conduct and/or principles of practice need to reflect this aspect of the profession. They also need to reflect the systemic oppression that is currently a part of the lives of many deaf signers in the UK. The statement by SASLI in section 7.6.3 is one step towards implementing this recommendation. Of course, there are several registration bodies in the UK of which SASLI is only one, therefore opening up a discussion about how best to convey to practitioners that they need to weigh up the disadvantages of systemic oppression as part of their agency would be a reasonable first step. I have already written an article for the ASLI quarterly magazine entitled *Power Cut* (Mole April 2018) about one aspect of my research, which is one practitioner venue for disseminating the outcomes of my research.

Continuing Professional Development seminars and training is another way of airing the issues identified in this research with SLIs and gauging their reactions, as well as sensitising them to the need for this type of reflexive practice. In line with the principles of critical dialogue, CPD would best be offered in a discursive way so as to encourage critical thinking and reflection.

Sharing this research outside of the profession of signed language interpreting, to deaf stakeholders in particular, needs to be a further element of the dissemination process that is prioritised. I have had an opportunity to share a part of my research with the local deaf community and intend to take up others as they become available. Creating an online video that is in BSL would also be an accessible resource for deaf signers.

7.10 Conclusion

This thesis set out to tell the story of my research, to answer the research questions that I devised and to offer new frameworks for conceptualising power dynamics. In this final chapter I have addressed the overall analysis of the data I collected from the participants

and proposed new ways for thinking about interpreter agency and *emancipatory interpreting*. I have also discussed my contributions, the limitations of the study and offered recommendations for research, training and policy.

Francis Bacon is attributed as being the first person to have said that ‘knowledge is power’ in his book *Meditationes Sacrae* in 1597. Foucault supports this claim by his use of the term power/knowledge (1980) in which the two words are inseparable. This research has presented an inquiry into the conceptualisation of power and collected the insights of SLIs and an analysis of those insights as knowledge to the field of interpreting studies. If knowledge is power, then sharing knowledge is empowerment. I have shared my knowledge in this thesis, empowering scholars, including myself, to take it further. Going forward I hope to share it more widely with practitioners to empower them in their professional work and deaf stakeholders of interpreting services to empower them in achieving their own goals and offering their own response to it.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Consent Form

Information Sheet – Reflective Diary Study

Power dynamics in sign language interpreted events

Introduction

You have expressed an interest in participating in a research study of sign language interpreter's perceptions of power dynamics in interpreted events. This research is being conducted by Heather Mole under the supervision of Jemina Napier and Katerina Strani (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, UK).

By agreeing to participate, you will keep a diary for 4-6 weeks about your perceptions of power in your work as a SLI. You will submit your diary to me, Heather Mole, periodically throughout this period. Please read this form and ask any questions before you decide whether to participate in the study.

Background Information

As mentioned before the study is designed to reveal the power dynamics at play in interpreted events and in particular the dynamics between you and your hearing and Deaf clients. The aims of the study are to make recommendations for improving interpreter training to incorporate education around power dynamics, and power management. I am committed to research that holds positive outcomes for members of the Deaf and interpreting communities, and which may contribute to the advancement of the interpreting profession.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, the study requires you to complete a minimum of 5 entries in a diary over a period of 4-6 weeks and take part in a debriefing interview over skype or facetime (approximately 30 minutes). The interview will be captured on video. You have already completed a background questionnaire. If you decide to participate, you will sign this form, thereby providing your consent to participate in the study.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to you for taking part in this study. There are direct benefits to you for participating in the study as you can use this as a Continuing Professional Development submission and gain insight into power dynamics in your work. Your participation will increase understanding about how interpreters handle power dynamics.

Confidentiality

If you agree to participate in this study, you are allowing your anonymised entries to be shared confidentially by the research team which comprises Heather Mole and a research colleague (name tbc) to act as a rater to check reliability of analysis, as well as my supervisors (Jemina Napier and Katerina Strani). Once I have received your diary entries I will anonymise them so that the rest of the research team does not know your identity.

Your diary will be uploaded and maintained on an external hard drive with password protection. Your diary will not be kept longer than 5 years. Your background information will also be kept confidentially on the same password protected hard drive and will only be used for demographic purposes. Any publications or presentations arising out of this data will anonymise the participants.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, but change your mind at any point during the study, you can withdraw from the study, including up to two weeks after submission of your diary. If you withdraw under these conditions, your data will immediately be removed from the study. There are absolutely no consequences to withdrawing from the study.

Contacts and Questions

The ethical aspects of this diary study have been approved by the Heriot-Watt University School of Management & Languages Ethics Review Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this

research, you may contact the Committee through James Richards (j.richards@hw.ac.uk).

Statement of Consent

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in the research study. Your signature indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. You are agreeing to participate in a reflective diary study for 4-6 weeks for research purposes and a follow up interview which will be video captured. Even after signing this form, you may withdraw from the study up to two weeks after completion.

I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix 2 Guidelines for Diary Writing and Template

Reflective diary-guidelines

What is the purpose of the diary?

As you know, I am interested in the power dynamics that take place during interpreted events between the hearing and Deaf clients and the interpreter. It's often the case that while sign language interpreters may be aware of power dynamics at play it's only afterwards that they are able to reflect more critically about what was happening. A diary provides a method of recording your reflections over a period of time about issues that have arisen during your work. As you go about your work it may be that at the end of the day you find yourself thinking about a situation that occurred whether it was positive/negative or neutral. This diary is a place where you can write about how you felt, what the situation was and why you think it happened.

What do I do, and how often?

Write about your interpreting experiences particularly when they relate to power dynamics when you're able. It is at your discretion as to how often you make entries in this diary and it will depend on your experiences. Write when something prompts a reflection on power. You may find that there are obvious power dynamics in an interpreted event between the hearing and Deaf clients, and you may find that you adjust your interpreting to manage these in some way, this is the type of situation that is of interest to me.

I am going to give you some pointers below as to what you might consider including in an entry:

The context

the date

the setting

the clients (without using names)

where this occurred

The power dynamics

what was happening between participants

how you felt in the interaction

what action you took or didn't take

what the outcome was

Critical reflection

how do you feel now as you reflect?

why do you think the power dynamics occurred?

what guided your involvement/actions as you navigated these power dynamics?

do you feel a sense of resolution/discomfort now? Why?

would you do it differently in future?

I have included a suggested template at the end of these guidelines. You may find it helpful, however, you may find it cramps your style. Feel free to reflect in a way that suits you, that feels comfortable and allows you to use everyday language. This is not an

academic exercise, it's more of a personal diary, where you record your thoughts and feelings about what has happened. (I'm not marking this, or looking for grammatical errors!) Plus if you have more to say than there is space to say it ignore the lines!

Practicalities

It may be that you have a preference for typing, talking or hand writing your diary entries - any of these formats are welcome. Perhaps you want to make a video diary, an audio diary (on your phone or laptop perhaps) or you want to type it into a word document then feel free. I would suggest that if you are using a device to type or record your entries then create a folder for them so that you can keep them organized and date them clearly.

After you complete each diary entry I ask that you send it to me by email. (If it is handwritten, you can photograph/scan it or photocopy it and post it). After you have completed the first entry I would like to organize a time to phone you to discuss your experience and give you the chance to ask questions about the process. Following that I will respond to any questions by email unless you request a phone call.

I am asking participants to make a minimum of 5 entries up to a maximum of 10. I will prompt you regularly and ask you to submit entries as you complete them. If you have made 5 entries within 4 weeks I will let you know and unless you feel you would like to continue for another 2 weeks you can finish at this point. After 6 weeks the study will come to an end.

Please keep copies for yourself for continuing professional development evidence. You can return originals or copies to me by email hjm1@hw.ac.uk or by post:

Heather Mole
Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies
Henry Prais Building
Heriot Watt University
Edinburgh
EH14 4AS

Conclusion of the research

The final step in the research process is that I would like to interview you find out what your experience of the study was and to clarify any of the entries you made. This will be arranged at a convenient time for you once I have had the time to read through your entries, and done via skype or facetime in order that I can record the interview.

Confidentiality

In the interests of confidentiality I would prefer that you anonymise names and identifying characteristics of clients/service-users when you make entries.

Examples from your diary entries may be quoted in publications and I will ensure your anonymity. I will also ensure the anonymity of any clients you refer to by obscuring regional information and institutional names where necessary. If it is clear to me that using a particular quote will inevitably reveal a person's identity I will refrain from using it.

If you have questions or concerns at any time, please email me on hjm1@hw.ac.uk and we can communicate by email or arrange a phone call.

Reflective Diary

Date of event:

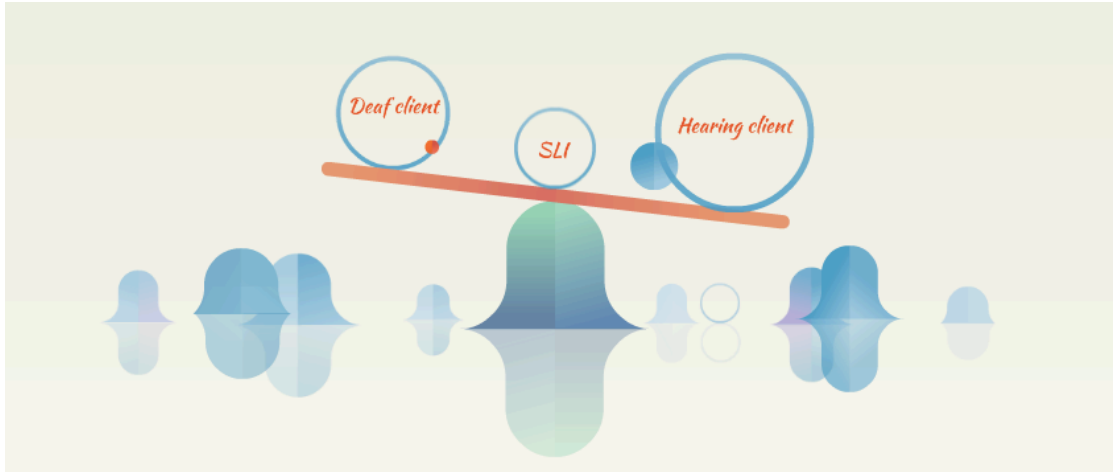
Date of reflection:

Tell me about the context of the interpreting situation: (participants, place, date etc..)

Describe the power dynamics between you and the hearing and Deaf participants, did you take any action? How did the situation make you feel?

Looking back on this event, how do you feel now? Why do you think you feel this way? Do you think the situation could have been improved? On reflection, would you do anything different in future?

Appendix 3 Recruitment Material



Research into power dynamics and sign language interpreting Recruitment for participants

My name's Heather Mole and I'm a PhD student at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. I am looking for Registered SLIs who are willing to write or record 5 entries for a reflective diary, about your work and instances where you have managed power dynamics between hearing and Deaf clients and yourself. The study also involves a debrief interview with me at the end.

If this strikes you as interesting then click on the link [here](#) to a video where I talk a little more about the research. Or go directly to [this link](#), which is the first step in the project where you find out more details and respond to initial questions in an online survey in preparation for taking part in the study.

The great news is this could count towards your continuing professional development credits (with SASLI or NRCPD).

Please pass on to your colleagues. Facebook link [here](#)

Please note that this research is specifically about hearing registered SLIs in the UK.

Page 2: Background relating to BSL and Deaf community

6. Are you a native signer (learned from birth)? * Required

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. Are your parents Deaf or hearing? * Required

- ☐ Both Deaf
☐ Both hearing
☐ Mixed Deaf and hearing

8. If you did not use BSL from birth, at what age did you start to learn BSL?

9. Where did you learn BSL? In what environments (classroom, at university, with a friend etc..) * Required

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Page 3: Background relating to Employment and Education

10. How long have you been working as a BSL/English interpreter * Required

- ☐ 0-5years
☐ 6- 10years
☐ 11-20 years
☐ 20-30 years
☐ 30+ years

11. What training route did you take to become a registered BSL/English interpreter? (please include where you trained - University, CACDP, NVQ etc..) * Required

12. What is the highest level of interpreter education that you hold? * Required

13. What is the highest level of education (in any discipline) that you hold? * Required

14. What work environments do you work in chiefly? (e.g. medical, educational,

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community, legal, work settings etc...) * Required

15. Please select the types of activities you are involved in as part of your professional development: * Required

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

☐ Supervisory group meetings

☐ Professional mentor/mentee relationship

☐ Supervisory relationship with a colleague/manager

☐ Attending lectures pertinent to my work

☐ Attending training and webinars pertinent to my work

☐ Other

15.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

Page 4: And finally

More background info

If you were to take part in this diary research you would be agreeing to comply with the requirements below. Please read this summary, to ensure you feel able to take part:

Procedures

If you agree to participate, the study requires you to complete a minimum of 5 entries in a diary (paper, typed, audio or video) over a period of 4-6 weeks. This will be followed up by a debriefing interview over skype/faceime which will be video-captured. You have already completed a background questionnaire. If you decide to participate you will receive a detailed consent form which you will need to sign and return with the diary.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to you for taking part in this study. There are direct benefits to you for participating in the study as you can use this as a Continuing Professional Development submission and gain insight into power dynamics in your work. I will provide a letter confirming your involvement for your Registering body and you will need to retain a copy of the entries for evidence.

Confidentiality

If you agree to participate in this study, you are allowing diary entries, which I will anonymise first, to be shared confidentially by the research team. Any publications or presentations arising out of this data will anonymise the participants. Only I, Heather Mole, will know your identity in relation to your diary entries.

Contacts and Questions

The ethical aspects of this diary study have been approved by the Heriot-Watt University School of Management & Languages Ethics Review Committee.

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If you wish to continue at this point, please complete the contact information and submit this questionnaire.

If you have concerns please let me know in the question box below.

16. Please give me your email address: * *Required*

17. Please give me a contact number at which I can reach you: * *Required*

18. If you have any concerns about taking part in this research, you can ask questions here, or leave me a note.

Page 5: Thank you

Thank you for completing step one of the research, I will be in touch with you shortly.

Heather Mole

PhD student

Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies

Heriot Watt University

hjm1@hw.ac.uk